

Developers from page 1F

Manor also will include subtle touches like old-fashioned street lighting, traditional site aspects like houses moved towards the street to accentuate the pedestrian-scale, small front yards and large rear yards and circle courts.

The homes themselves, although not historic reproductions, will harken back to a different time with more extensive use of gables, elaborate dentel molding, shake siding, traditional windows and front porches.

"I wanted, and I think people want, a little more character," Elbaz said.

Although the development is new, Elbaz said, he has already gotten a lot of positive feedback from people. "I think people are tired of the same old thing."

Architect Dan Barry, a partner at Springline Design Group in Seio Township and the architect for Yerkes Manor, said more of his clients are coming in with ideas about historically influenced homes than ever before.

At Yerkes Manor, he said his charge was to design homes for a development with a Victorian feel to it.

"And I think we succeeded,"

Barry said. That said, these homes are not historic reproductions. "That just isn't possible today."

Besides cost restraints (a historic reproduction would be extremely expensive), the modern amenities today's home buyers demand can't be accommodated in a reproduction.

"Take garages — people want two- and three-car garages — you're not going to see that on a Victorian home," he said.

If you have to attach a garage, however, there are no rules against making it fit a more Victorian scheme. "That, I think, was our biggest problem — translating the Victorian (architecture into the present)."

When people ask for a historic-style home, they may not realize that such homes are traditionally very compartmentalized — meaning they have smaller, separate rooms as opposed to the open homes of today, Elbaz said.

Depending on the degree of accuracy demanded by the homeowner, the architect sometimes has to ignore some of the ideas of modern architecture.

Norman Finkelstein, vice president of the Irvine Group in Farm-

ington Hills, said builders and developers use a variety of ways to pay deference to the past. Sometimes, builders will name their developments after previous owners or historical events.

Marketing materials and other advertisements attempt to capture these ideas as well, reflecting what was there before.

Sometimes, the area's history plays a very significant part in the new project.

Berwyck on the Park and Berwyck Place, an equestrian development with a private saddle club for its residents built around a horse theme complete with riding paths, paddocks and access to the Irvine Group in Milford Township, owes its very existence

to history of the property.

When he and Irvine Group president Paul Levine were searching for potential sites, they had no inkling they were going to build an equestrian development.

"We were actually looking at a different site when we saw this parcel," Finkelstein said.

When they saw the property was up for sale, they stopped and discovered an old horse stable. A little digging revealed that the property has long been used as a horse stable.

Irvine and Finkelstein, both horse admirers, decided they could respect the history of the site and combine it with their intentions to develop the property.

Finkelstein said deference to

history has several advantages. For one thing, people moving into a development like to have a sense of a past.

Deference to history can also be comforting to the community, he said. It's not uncommon for existing residents to contest new developments and rural growth.

A development that reflects the past history of the site can help allay fears that the developer plans to come in and disrupt a community.

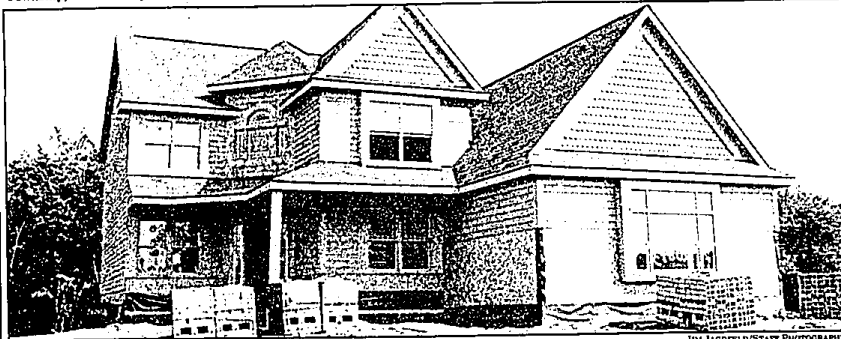
Ironically, sometimes a developer's wish to be historically accurate can run counter to the wishes of the community or neighbors.

People who move into new developments, for example, will of-

ten complain about an animal farm nearby, some people were less than pleased that Berwyck developments would continue to use of the land for boarding horses.

Finkelstein also said he's seen instances where developers use history as a mere marketing tool — particularly on the East Coast where references of the Revolutionary and Civil Wars are routinely used as little more than a gimmick.

"You have to be careful, because people (who value history) will be turned off by hollow references," he said. "Developing (with an eye to history) is sometimes a fine balancing act."



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