

Home Front

Builder lends financial help to rehabilitate an old jewel

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Who says new-home builders have no appreciation of older houses?

Rouse/Chamberlin Homes does, and to prove it, the builder is lending a financial hand to a rehabber with a proven track record in his effort to restore an 18th-century house on the site of a development of 65 luxury houses in East Bradford Township.

The house, on Copeland School Road, was built around 1750 by John Cope, an early settler. The Cope House is on a 94-acre tract that Rouse/Chamberlin bought for its Kenmara development, which has houses priced in the \$300,000 range.

Although recognized as a centerpiece of local history by the East Bradford Historical Commission, the Cope House had fallen on hard times, and thanks to neglect and long periods of abandonment, was uninhabitable and would remain so without a substantial commitment.

In addition, a number of commercial and office developers had been courting Rouse/Chamberlin with serious and potentially profitable offers for the property, said Jonathan Penders, the builder's land-management coordinator.

Instead, the builder chose Youssef Andreaos of Thornbury Township, who had expressed an interest in restoring the landmark, Penders said. To do so, Rouse/Chamberlin made "significant" financial concessions to allow Andreaos to take on the project.

These concessions, outlined in an agreement last year, include deferral of the undisclosed purchase price (the builder reportedly had been asking \$135,000), pending completion of exterior renovations, and a significant reduction in that price to ensure that there would be a proper renovation.

In addition, Penders said, the builder will carry the Cope House and pay the interest, taxes and insurance on it during the renovation.

Penders said that Andreaos is bringing a reputation for "fine craftsmanship and a respect for history" to the Cope House project. Rouse/Chamberlin's faith is an-

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chored in the quality of Andreaos' two other successful local projects: the Mediterranean, his West Chester restaurant, and his house in Thornbury, a converted 19th-century railroad station.

"We're spending more money than some people say is necessary, but this renovation will enhance the historic ambience of the community for both present and future residents," Penders said. "We wanted to be sure that the renovation is done properly, and Youssef has a proven track record for going the extra mile. This arrangement is a winning situation for everyone concerned about this landmark."

Penders said that he and Andreaos expected that the 3,000-square-foot Cope House, when restored, would bring in excess of \$300,000 when put on the market. That price is pretty much in line

with what the new houses are going for in Kenmara.

Restoration will include reconstruction of the building's original stone exterior, new roofings and windows, and the installation of state-of-the-art structural and electrical systems, Penders said.

The historical commission was involved in Rouse/Chamberlin's negotiations with Andreaos, Penders said. The fact "will ensure the safe restoration of a permanent landmark. The commission's concern for the Cope House has generated extensive public interest in preservation, and we appreciate their efforts in helping to find the right buyer."

The builder recently hosted a historic preservation class from the University of Pennsylvania. Members studied the house under the direction of architect John D. Milner of John Milner Architects in

Chadds Ford, who teaches the class. Milner's firm has done historic renovations of dozens of public buildings, including the Winterthur Museum in Delaware, Brown Bros. Harriman building in Philadelphia, and the King of Prussia Inn, as well as private houses.

The students recently released their findings in a report to the builder and the historical commission, Penders said.

Information on Kenmara or the Cope House: 610-436-9595.

Florence development

■ The debut of a builder's design model marks the grand opening of WoodsEdge at Mallard, a development of 157 townhomes from Triad Development Co. in Burlington, N.C.

The homes are priced from \$150,000 to \$250,000. The

Priced from \$150,000 to \$250,000, the four bedrooms with a full kitchen includes a library, a room with a fireplace.