

# ROCHESTER BUSINESS JOURNAL

VOLUME 17, NUMBER 51

DAILY EDITION: <http://www.rbjdaily.com>

MARCH 22, 2002

## Pittsford estates project targets high-end niche

By LYNETTE HAALAND

Ketmar Development Corp. is developing a posh Pittsford neighborhood with dozens of million-dollar estates.

The 35 homes and lots in Malvern Hills—a more than \$35 million project—are expected to cost \$600,000 to \$2 million. Two homes are occupied, two are under construction and three lots are reserved.

The new community—modeled after a place of the same name in England—is an 88-acre site located off of Thornell Road and Mendon Road, south of the village of Pittsford.

“We wanted to site houses where there is privacy and estates,” said Marie Kenton, president and principal of Ketmar.

Malvern Hills joins other high-end communities being developed, including Cobblestone Creek in Victor and Autumn Wood in Pittsford.

Frederick Herman, executive vice president of the Rochester Home Builders’ Association, has seen a change in the local community since Sept. 11.

“We are seeing more and more large-scale remodeling and more and more people upgrading their homes and lifestyle because they may be spending more time at home,” Herman said.

He also believes that Malvern Hills fills a niche.

“We need affordable housing, empty-nester housing and certainly housing for those who want the luxurious 8,000 to 10,000 to 12,000 (square) foot homes,” Herman said.

Kenton said one reason the Rochester community will be able to support such a high-end community is because people are changing their investment strategies since the terrorist attacks.

“People are prioritizing family, and homes are at the forefront of that,” she said.

Kenton, who runs the design build firm



Photo by Kimberly McKinzie

**Malvern Hills is modeled after a place of the same name in England.**

with her husband, Charles, started designing Malvern Hills three years ago. The town of Pittsford granted approval for the project just more than two years ago. The roads and infrastructure were finished last November.

One aspect that sets Malvern Hills apart is its amount of green space and size of the lots. Each lot averages an acre.

“We’ve tried to border our sites with green space and make it more interesting and still have the elbow room,” Kenton said.

The buffer land around the 35 lots includes woods, meadows, ponds and Mill Creek. There is a 44-acre conservation area on the site where hawks, fox and deer are common. There are also walking paths.

The main road through the community will be lined with London Plane trees, commonly found in the Greater London area. They will be lit from below in the evening.

“Eventually they will grow and canopy the way. It establishes that Old (World) feel,” Kenton said.

Malvern Hills is designed to resemble the terrain of its namesake in the Midlands area of England.

“We were there a year ago. The whole topography is very similar, although we don’t have as many sheep (here),” Kenton said.

England is Charles Kenton’s homeland.

An English country manor home valued at over \$1 million was built two years ago as Malvern Hills’ first home. The home features many windows, 10-foot ceilings, and a stucco and stone finish.

The home was the first Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra Inc. symphony showhouse fund-raiser, featuring work from some 30 local designers. Tickets were sold over the three-week open house and proceeds went toward funding the RPO youth orchestra.

This year Ketmar and the RPO are teaming up for their second RPO showhouse in late May. The event is expected to draw 10,000 attendees.

A Hampton, shingle-style home will be featured with a two-story conservatory, a heavy arched front door, a floating staircase, mahogany lounge and wine cellar.

Construction of the 8,000 square foot, \$2 million home is in the final stages.

The Kentons oversee each Ketmar project from the planning through construction.

Established in 1988, Ketmar generally works on up to eight high-end homes and vacation homes a year. The firm has seven employees.

Ketmar has worked closely with the town of Pittsford on the Malvern Hills project even to the extent of taking a tree inventory. In general, the town wants more green space and less home density.

“We envision this growing and becoming something 50 years from now that has a lot of resemblance to the Houston Barnard tract,” Kenton said.

Houston Barnard was a turn-of-the-century developer behind many homes on Ambassador Drive, Sandringham Road and Esplanade Drive in mainly the Brighton area.

“It could take as long as five years (to fill). We’ve had a lot of interest this spring,” Marie Kenton said.

*lhaaland@rbj.net / 585-546-8303*