

Seniors Settle Into New Homes, Await Finishing Touches



Laundry flaps on a clothesline. Down the street pruned juniper limbs heap up in a yard. Occasionally someone ventures out to pay a visit to a neighbor. Relatives come and go regularly.

The new senior citizen complex that promises to afford not only housing but a way of life, is slowly being populated and the old folks are settling into new routines.

Some left their old places reluctantly, resistant to the idea of uprooting their lives for a move across town. Others welcomed the opportunity to leave drafty, aging and often crowded houses behind. One woman had been packed since June, the original date for occupancy.

When tenants finally received their keys from welfare worker Gale Rogers they opened their doors on new furniture and the promised wood stoves ("The old kind!" they cheered). Smoke-houses are only a few steps away. But many of the features that make the complex unique among HUD developments have yet to be completed.

The community building —

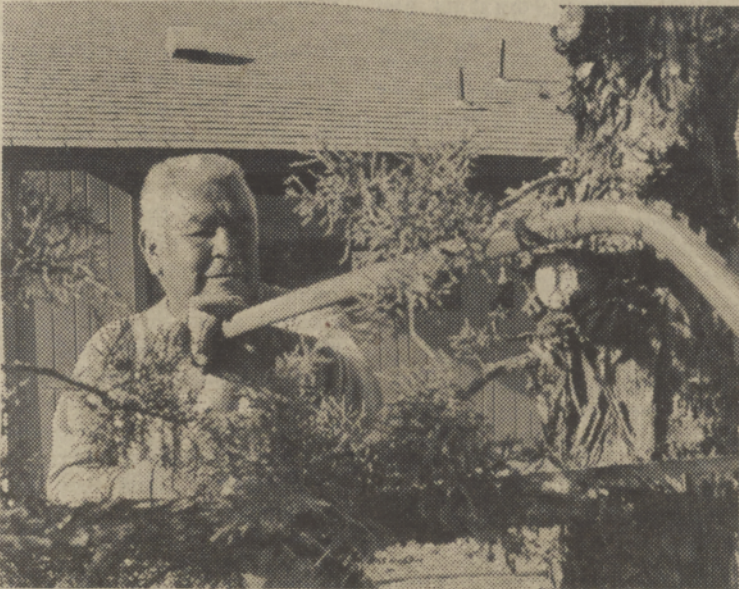
with fireplace, dining area, saunas, whirlpools, and a park-style patio — will not be ready until the end of the year. By that time a "senior citizens' representative" may have been hired by the Health Branch to oversee building functions and provide escort services for the old folks.

A medical emergency fire alarm system has been designed for the complex and should be installed soon. Panic buttons and photoelectric smoke detectors will automatically alert the police department to ensure instantaneous response.

Other details such as landscaping and sprinkler systems are also forthcoming.

Physical comforts are only part of the community's planned profile. The old folks themselves will be helping to design a coordinated program of services and social activities to make life not just comfortable but stimulating.

Meanwhile an air of contentment is already spreading over the community as the seniors luxuriate in the knowledge that they have not been forgotten.



Story and Photos
by Cynthia Stowell

PASSKEY

(top left) Keys to about half the two-bedroom homes in the HUD senior citizens complex have been turned over to residents after a quick check-in by welfare worker Gale Rogers. The old folks seem to like the warm, attractively situated homes in the quiet hilltop neighborhood.

LANDSCAPING

(above) Informed that landscaping wouldn't be completed until next spring, Roscoe Stacona took matters into his own hands and began trimming the many junipers in his yard. Some Oregon Grape and ponderosa pine have already been planted throughout the complex.

HAVE STOVE, NO WOOD

(above right) Senior citizens are delighted to have old-style cast iron wood stoves in addition to their central electric heating. Many, like Harriet Williams, don't realize that wood is available for the asking (through the welfare department) and in the meantime are scheming up ways to cook Indian bread on top.

IS THERE ROOM?

(right) Annie Dick didn't realize how many belongings she had accumulated until she had to move them. She took a smoke break to try to figure out how she had crammed it all into a bedroom half the size of her new one. Annie may be able to do without her sizable collection of sweaters because "chills" aren't as likely in her warm new home.

