

30-YEAR FIXED
3.37%
 0.7 points
 Last week: 3.39% Month: 3.49% Year: 4.11%

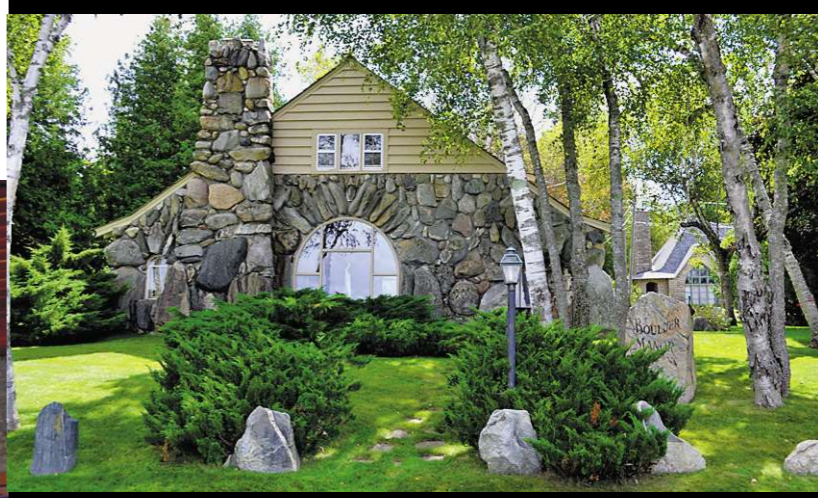
National mortgage rates

15-YEAR FIXED
2.66%
 0.6 points
 Last week: 2.70% Month: 2.77% Year: 3.38%

realestate

MICHIGAN HOUSE ENVY

PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHER K. EDWARDS



Boulder Manor

It's 3 Earl Young houses for price of one in Charlevoix



HAND-BUILT BOULDER MANOR

Where: 14765 Boulder Ave., Charlevoix

Price: \$1,195,000

Bedrooms: 3

Bathrooms: 2

Square footage: 2,467

Key features: Visionary builder Earl Young created this house between 1928 and 1938, interrupted by the Great Depression. It's built of glacial boulders with stone arches, beamed ceilings and handsome landscaping. Other buildings on the property include a stone-built children's playhouse and a three-car garage with a guest studio. The kitchen has been remodeled, but little else has been changed from the original version.

Contact: Chris Edwards, Edwards Estates, 231-350-1820, co-listed with Kelly Kenifeck Small, Hall & Hunter, Birmingham, 248-631-8750.

By Judy Rose
 Free Press Special Writer

With its low arched doors, sloping stone walls and deep-set mullioned windows, Boulder Manor in Charlevoix looks like it was built by a Hobbit — granted a very rich Hobbit with a Lake Michigan view.

It stands at the gateway to Boulder Park, a shoreline enclave of whimsical, hand-built stone cottages — called “fairy houses” or “mushroom houses” — the work of Charlevoix’s visionary builder Earl Young.

In the 1920s through 1950s, Young built 28 quirky homes and public buildings, which draw thousands of tourists to Charlevoix each year, says the Charlevoix Visitors Bureau.

Now after 40-plus years of ownership by the same family, Boulder Manor has come up for sale. The price is \$1,195,000.

Its routine statistics — 2,467 square feet, three bedrooms, two bathrooms — can’t suggest the real story.

First of all, this is not one house, but three. In Goldilocks fashion, one’s little, one’s medium, one’s big.

Smallest is the children’s playhouse, built from boulders to mimic the main house. Around 1928, Young built this little house first, so his kids could play while he worked.

The middle-size structure is the three-car garage, which includes a studio-style guest apartment.

The main cottage, with its dramatic stonework and low-sweeping roof, is one of Young’s largest.

Inside and out, he shunned conventional 2-by-4 framing and constructed all walls from huge boulders — granite and limestone dropped here by glaciers 14,000 years ago. Every room shows Young’s edgy eye and master crafts-

manship, but the living room is a stunner. Five enormous glacial boulders frame the fireplace there.

In a move that would be illegal today, Young used heavy equipment to drag boulders out of Lake Michigan.

The late Shirley Cohen was a young widow when she bought Boulder Manor in 1969, says her son Rick Cohen of Ann Arbor.

Their family had already been renting summer vacation homes in Boulder Park, and her adult daughter owned one. Cohen was only the home’s third

owner. “I have fond memories of coming of age here,” says Rick Cohen, 18, at that time. Since then, his children and many others have filled Young’s playhouse. “Kids from all over Charlevoix at any time,” he says. “Generations of children have played in that doll house.”

Charlevoix broker Chris Edwards of Edwards Estates, www.edwardsestatesmi.com has staged Boulder Manor throughout with art and sculpture from Charlevoix’s large art community, appropriate for this venue.

“It’s more than a house,” Rick Cohen says. “It’s really a piece of northern Michigan art.”



RESPECT FOR LANDSCAPE | CHARLEVOIX’S MUSHROOM HOUSES

The “mushroom houses” of Charlevoix are one of that picturesque town’s great tourist attractions. They are the life’s work of Earl Young, an untrained architect who constantly walked the woods and Lake Michigan shoreline to search out the glacial boulders that made each of his houses a work of singular art.

“Mushroom” refers to the roofs on some houses — organic, undulating,

often swooping close to the ground. Other popular names for them are fairy houses, gnome homes, Hansel and Gretel and Early Mother Goose.

It’s said Young could remember the size and appearance of hundreds of boulders for years. When he found those he liked, he’d often hide them in the woods or bury them to keep them from other builders. His houses were never

designed as an architect would, but be crafted on-site as he sketched on scraps of paper.

Like Frank Lloyd Wright, Young had great respect for landscape and slid his homes into their settings with care. Also like Wright, he was nearly clueless in the kitchen, so most Young kitchens end up remodeled.

— Judy Rose

FROM TOP LEFT: Five boulders frame the fireplace in the living room. The main house, with three bedrooms and two bathrooms, is one of Earl Young’s largest. The children’s playhouse mimics the main house. The kitchen and dining room in the main house. The interior of the playhouse. An archway leads to Lake Michigan.