

## LETTER FROM THE SELLER

# 288 Whitmore Street, Unit 207, Oakland

I have owned/sold seven homes in my life, but this is the first time I have been invited to write a letter to prospective buyers about my experience living in those homes. Nonetheless, I am very happy to do so.

I lived more than 40 years in Southern California but moved to Oakland in November 2019 to finally be near my daughter and her family. She and I have always been “close” in spirit (her dad died when she was eight, so it was just the two of us), but she went back East for college in 1994 and stayed there until late 2013, when my son-in-law was offered a new job opportunity in Berkeley. By then, they had an almost 3 y.o. daughter, and a second daughter was born a year later. I was living in Westlake Village CA at the time, but for various reasons couldn’t consider relocating until the Fall of 2019. That October, I came up and spent more than a week looking for a new place to live in Oakland.

The very first place I looked at was a two-bedroom condo in Parkwoods. I liked it immediately and knew my granddaughters would absolutely love coming to the pool (and they did!). However, I had no idea “what else” was out there and wanted a substantial point of comparison before making any final commitment. Over the next week, I went all over town looking at both condos and small houses. Each had their strengths and weaknesses, but none surpassed the location or “prettiness” of Parkwoods. Meanwhile, the Parkwoods unit I had originally toured was sold.

I was running out of time and thought I would have to come back in a few weeks and look again. However, on my last full day in town, a new two-bedroom unit in Parkwoods came on the market—Building 260, #213. Unlike the first unit I had seen, Building 260 is at the back of the complex, and #213 is on the back of the building. As such, it is extremely quiet, and all that you see out of the windows are trees—it is like living in the middle of a woods! It was lovely, I committed to it immediately, and I have not been disappointed.

Initially, I wondered if I would regret being so close to the elevator and trash room—it was hugely convenient, but I wondered about possible noise. However, I can happily report that I heard nothing! Also, the fact that the unit is off the atrium rather than a hallway allows natural light to come into the kitchen. That is why I installed the window treatment that is still there—you can open either/both the top and bottom parts of the shade to let in the light while keeping the closed part of the shade more or less centered in the window to protect your privacy. It works beautifully.

I really enjoyed having two ensuite bedrooms with their private baths. This is not a large condo, but it often seems so because of the privacy both I and my visitors had as a result of this layout. I know the previous owners, who had two pre-teen children, also appreciated this aspect. I also loved the storage capacity. The walk-in closet in the guest bedroom is very spacious, but the one in the master suite is huge! I am basically a neat and organized person, but I’m also a packrat! To be able to neatly store all my “stuff” was a God-send. Finally, the large storage closet on balcony off the living room allowed me ample room for Christmas decorations, bulk purchases, and the like.

The previous owners had installed the vinyl flooring in the living room and foyer, but the bedrooms were still carpeted, and the kitchen/bathrooms still had the original linoleum. I asked them for all the particulars regarding the flooring they had installed and was able to go to the same store for the same exact flooring, and match everything throughout the unit (hence avoiding the “two-tone” look). This kind of flooring is also extremely easy to keep clean!

Finally, finding a place with two assigned parking spots (never mind in a protected garage) is extremely rare—and mine are quite close to the lobby door. I kept a folded wire grocery cart against the wall in front of my car, which made hauling whatever I bought up to the unit an easy job.

More days than not, I would take a walk in the early evening, from my building, out the front gate, and down Tunnel Road to the end of the sidewalk, then turn around and walk back. This is a loop of 1.2 miles (according to my Apple Watch)--the first half all downhill, the second half all up! I met a lot of lovely neighbors doing their version of the same thing—and/or they owned dogs! I also got to know the wild turkeys who hang out on the woodsy property. They are all hens, who mind their own business, but one time (only) I saw about six of them being “hit on” by a tom. He was yakking away and strutting his stuff for all he was worth. The girls just rolled their eyes, turned their backs, and continued to forage. I loved it!

My reason for moving away from Oakland is the same as my reason for moving there to begin with. Once again, my daughter and her husband had new job opportunities—this time in Eden Prairie, Minnesota! As someone who grew up near Philadelphia, went to college in Washington, D.C., and subsequently lived in California for decades, I think Minnesota is arguably the last place I thought I’d ever end up! But here we are. I’m not suggesting you follow in my footsteps, but I do hope you will enjoy Parkwoods as much as I did. I was very happy there.