

Escarpment plan set for release late



MOLDING A CRAFT

Sylvia Lee of the Credit Valley Artisans was one of the craftsmen demonstrating their work last Wednesday at the open house at Cedarvale Cottage. The open house, combin-

ed with the group's first general meeting of the year, was designed to give members of the public an opportunity to see the kind of courses being offered by the group.

Preliminary proposals for the Niagara Escarpment Commission (NEC) draft land-use plan will be ready for release in February, one year behind schedule.

The preliminary proposals, which were drawn up by two advisory committees working in conjunction with the NEC, are to be presented simultaneously to all the municipalities along the Escarpment. There are 55 municipalities, four regions and four counties involved in the plan.

The object of the NEC is to come up with an official plan for the Escarpment. The preliminary proposals are the first step. These proposals will be submitted to the municipalities, which will have four months or more to make their opinions known and suggest changes to the plan, NEC information officer Cora Barwell said.

Once the information has been received from the municipality, "it's back to the drawing board," to design a draft plan, Miss Barwell said.

Once the draft plan is completed, a series of public hearings will be held to allow the public to make its opinions known. Finally, the draft plan and the submissions from the public will be sent to the cabinet, which will adopt the parts of the plan which it sees fit.

Miss Barwell said the draft plan is "another six months or so down the road." Adding to that the four months which the municipalities have to discuss

the preliminary proposals, residents along the Escarpment are looking at a wait of approximately a year before the public hearings are held.

The two advisory groups which worked with the NEC on formulating the preliminary proposals are made up of politicians and municipal planners, on one committee and representatives of various interest groups on the other.

Work on the official plan for the Niagara Escarpment began with the formation of the NEC in 1973. The purpose of the official plan is to preserve the Escarpment area, which covers 1.3 million acres of land. The Escarpment is considered unique in terms of its prominence as a geological feature, the beauty of the scenic viewpoints along its length and the varieties of "special interest" flowers and wildlife habitats.

Once the official plan is adopted by the government, it will replace all the existing official plans in the Escarpment area. The mandate of the NEC, according to a commission spokesman, is to preserve the "continuous natural environment" of the Escarpment and lands in its vicinity, and to permit only such development as is compatible with that concept.

The advisory committees discussed areas which were divided into six major groupings, and sub-divided into 22 policy headings. The policies cover such items as preservation of specific areas, such as

forests and lakeshores, scenic drives, regulations of development in major and minor urban centres, general rural development and the Bruce Trail.

There are a number of sensitive issues involved in drafting an official plan, NEC chair-

man Ivor McMullin said. Many of the problems arise from present ownership of the land, and guaranteeing the rights of the owners without cutting the public off from enjoying the land. The Bruce Trail is an example of one of the main problems in this area.

The preliminary proposals, while being accessible to the public, are not really meant for wide-spread public distribution, Miss Barwell said. They are intended mainly for municipalities to base their submissions on.

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Reject townhouse application

An application to build two 20-unit, five-storey stacked townhouses on Carruthers Road in Georgetown was turned down last week for a number of reasons including lack of sewage treatment capacity to service the development.

Intermediate planner Jim Shewchuk reported that property owned by 261650 Investments Ltd. is only 1.8 acres in size and triangular in shape. It is presently occupied by a single-family, two-storey brick home and a log shed. Because

the Canadian National Railway runs along the south side of the property and its eastern neighbours is a factory, the Ministry of the Environment could demand 100-foot set backs for buffering purposes, he said.

The R3 zoning on the property puts a limit of 26 residents on it for sewage treatment capacity and the 40 townhouses would far exceed this. Five-storey buildings would also be incompatible with surrounding single family dwellings. Police have warned that Carruthers Road is a dead-end street and the additional traffic exiting from it onto Main Street would cause problems.

In his report Mr. Shewchuk noted that single-family dwellings or semi-detached units would meet the zoning requirements and suggested that this be pointed out to the developer.

This is the first application for stacked townhouses which Halton Hills has received.

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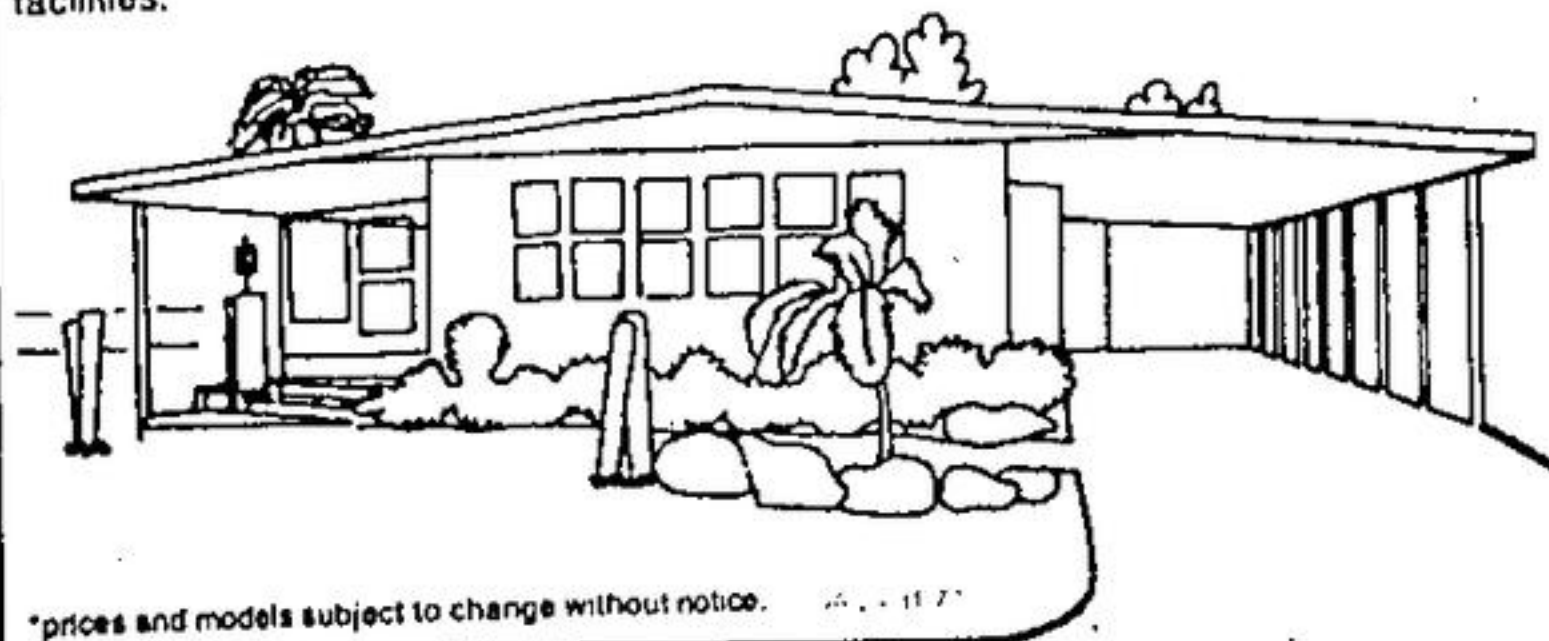
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