Councillor tells ratepayers of town's past

By PAUL DORSEY

Herald staff writer A slide presentation recounting Georgetown's past gave members of the Georgetown Area Ratepayers Association a good indication last week of what role they can play in the community's future develop-

Ward 3 Coun. John McDonald, a well-known local historian who authored the booklet Halton Sketches, punctuated his presentation to the association Wednesday night with comments and comparative



John McDonald

slides depicting some of the negative effects which the passage of time has had upon Georgetown's appearance and atmosphere.

Coun. McDonald addressed about 20 members and supporters of the ten-month old Association, which was holding its first annual general meeting at Georgetown District High School.

The high school itself was among the relatively modern structures photographed by Coun. McDonald for comparison with other buildings of the past. Preceding it in the presentation was a slide of the old high school, a multi-storey, eye eatching structure with an imposing tower which was, in turn, built on the farm originally owned by George Kennedy, after whom Georgetown was named.

Early start for budget committee

The Halton board of education decided to strike its finance committee earlier in the year, so that the committee will have more time to study the board's budget prior to making a recommendation to the board.

The board approved the recommendation which said the committee should be struck in November, with meetings beginning in December.

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Generally Coun McDonald allowed the slides to talk for themselves in those cases where development has taken a turn for the worse. Examples of magnificent architecture dating from the mid-nineteenth century were displayed, then compared with the uninspiring buildings that have replaced them or, in other instances, with the deteriorated, neglected buildings they have since become.

Also among the slides were photographs of the late Rex Heslop, the developer who built Rexdale before approaching Georgetown's municipal council with plans for extensive subdivisions that would ultimately triple the community's population. An aerial view showed the proximity of Prince Charles Drive and Bryon and Shelly Streets to vast expanses of farmland circa 1954, just before the Delrex sub division was developed.

The potential for groups like the ratepayers association to get involved with the municipal decision making process was evident in Coun. McDonald's observations about some of the nineteenth century buildings that are still making headlines.

FIRST VIEWED

Chapel Street Public School was viewed first as it appeared nearly 100 years ago when it served as the town's only public school, then as it appears today with boards on the windows. Sold recently by the Halton Board of Education to private developers, the school may become a rest home if a proposal currently before council gains support.

The Georgetown Public Library started out as a congregational church, after which Church Street was named. Today, overcrowded with books and other library services, it is at the centre of a controversy that entails the most important aspects of the community's development prblems, symbolizing the need for bigger and better facilities to serve a larger population.

Association president Lawrie Duggan prefaced the slide presentation with comments about the ratepayers' future role in monitoring and helping to guide, through public input. the town's development cited a need for the association to continue attending council allocates Georgetown's limited sewage treatment capacity so that "the town grows the

way its citizens want it to," Mr. Duggan also expressed hope that council will in future find ways to keep the electorate better informed about meet-

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ings seen in the local press.

MODEST CRHCISM Halton regional council also came under modest criticism in the president's remarks for its "lack of accountability" to the region's citizens. Mr. Dugan said regional council's practice of holding afternoon meetings, which few residents can attend because of work commitments, may not be in the best interests of voters who wish to monitor the performance of their elected representatives.

Coun. McDonald's presentation recounted the history of Georgetown and district from since 1823, when George Kennedy settled here.

first sheet of paper manufactured in Ontario, then the Credit Hiver dynamo that became the province's first hydroelectricity producing power plant. In 1856, Georgetown got its first railway line, in 1917 its first suburban railway service

The arrival of the "industr-

tous" Barber family and their

subsequent introduction of a

paper mill that produced the

helped establish the community's stongest industrial base. MANY HOTELS The area's many hotels were

documented, including Clark's

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which operated until 1931, and

in 1905 the coated paper mill

that later became Abitibi and

Hotel, later the McGibbon, the Exchange Hotel which is now more copularly known as the Station House, the Canadian House Hotel which occupied a site at Mili and Guelph Streets where the Arcade and several apartments now stand, and the American House Hotel where the Three Sisters restaurant is

today. Coun. McDonald's presentation featured amusing anecdotes, including photographs of the annual "Drummer's Snack" parade and picnic and the leisurelyrecreationalactivities on Wilber Park Lake, a large pond that covered the lands near what is now Main and James Streets. The only rema-

Finally, there was the oceasion when one of the town's most illustrious founding fathers. Colonel John R. Barber. placed an advertisement in the Georgetown Herald announcing that he would be driving his early model autombile around the track at Fairgrounds Park. Citizens could bring their horses along and drive them in the opposite direction around the track, Colonel Barber offered, so that the animals could get used to the disturbing racket of the tin lizzy. Many townsfolk, Coun. McDonald said, took him un on the offer

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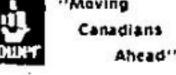
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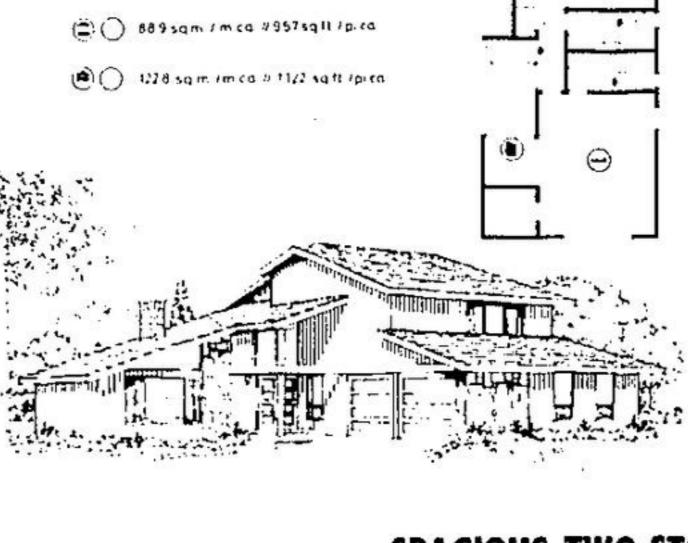
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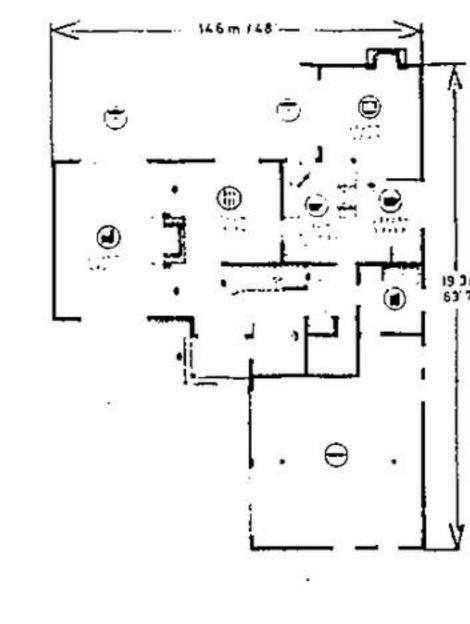
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wide sliding glass doors leading onto the large rear patio. All three bedrooms are positioned on the second level around the central bath and spacious linen storage area. Each has excellent natural lighting and generous closet storage. The commodious master has a three-piece ensuite with an elevated tub, a full walk-in closet and a sizeable alcove which may be utilized as a library or office

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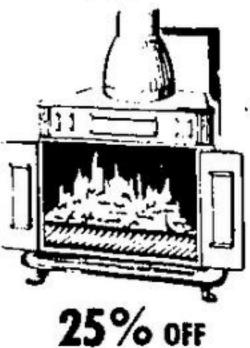
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