

Approval seems likely for Acton subdivision

Town council has stopped short of granting approval in principle to the 13-acre housing development proposed for Acton which appeared to have taken off to a flying start the week before.

The development would occupy vacant land on the east of Churchill Road North, behind existing homes, and a second plot between the Acton curling club and homes on the west side of Churchill Street. Development would consist of about 50 single dwelling units or up to 75 units if both single and semi-detached homes were built.

A 7-4 vote at council's Monday night meeting saw the planning board's recommendation suggesting conditional approval for the proposal by P. Civerio Investments and Cedar Road Developments tossed out, leaving only a related recommendation intact referring the proposal to planning staff for a report.

It was largely the arguments of councillors Roy Booth and Walter Biehn, neither of whom were in attendance at last week's board meeting, which created the change in stance. While both councillors conceded that the proposal could merit approval, they warned against sanctioning any scheme before it has come under public and planning staff scrutiny.

UNACCEPTABLE
Town planning director Mario Venditti pointed out that he had advised the board to simply refer the proposal to his department for review. Any aberration, he said, would be "unacceptable."

Despite the contention of Coun. Russ Miller and others that council "shouldn't sidestep the public's opportunities for input", Coun. Ed Wood, who advocated approval in principle for the project last week, pointed out that he has received no complaints following publication of pertinent details in the Acton weekly newspaper last Wednesday.

Council would be "circumventing just one step" in the planning process, Coun. George Maltby agreed, offering to consider approval in principle for any other project which shows similar merit in future.

Mayor Pete Pomeroy's attempt at instructing Mr. Venditti "off the record" to return to the next board meeting with a "positive report" on the proposal became unnecessary after council defeated the offending recommendation.

The defeating vote came after clerk-administrator Ken Richardson pointed out to council that the town's solicitor would be hard-pressed to defend the project if it were challenged before the Ontario Municipal Board without any evidence of public or staff input attached.

NEW FORMAT
Voting in favor of the approval in principle were councillors Wood, Maltby, Pat Patterson and Ross Knechtel. Those opposed were Mayor Pomeroy and councillors Booth, Biehn, Miller, John McDonald and Marilyn Serjeantson. Only Coun. Mike Armstrong was absent.

At the mayor's suggestion, the town's general committee will consider a new format for receiving development proposals, as initially recommended by Mr. Richardson. All such applications will first come before the general committee in written form, receive blanket referral to the planning department for a report, and then come before planning board complete with all pertinent information.

Last Tuesday at planning board Acton councillor Ed Wood said development was needed in the area to keep Acton from becoming "a dead, dormant town," as planning board Tuesday approved a 13-acre residential development in northeast Acton, subject to a planners report.

The original recommendation before the board had simply asked for a report from town planner Mario Venditti, but Coun. Wood felt the approval could allow the planner

freedom to write a more positive report.

"We're telling him 'we want it, now tell us what's wrong'."

Councillors were concerned about sewage capacity in the town, but were told by Mr. Venditti that Acton has capacity for up to 3,000 more people or the equivalent in industry. Mayor Pete Pomeroy pointed out approval of this development "may preclude something else later."

Coun. Pat Patterson discussed questions of sewage

capacity calling it "theory" as far as the official plan is concerned. "We've got to get off our butts and get development going in Halton Hills," he said.

Coun. George Maltby told planning board that when Milton exceeded its sewage treatment capacity, it pushed the province until it was given more. "We've lived too close to the law of Queen's Park," he concluded.

COUNCILLOR UPSET
Motives for prompting the

development upset Coun. Harry Levy, who said that asking for this because of lack of recent development demonstrated "a pretty poor attitude" adding "to give orders to the planning department to accept this is almost reasonable."

A second request that a 400-acre parcel of land which includes this development and extends farther east along Highway 7 be considered for inclusion in the new official plan was quashed by the board.

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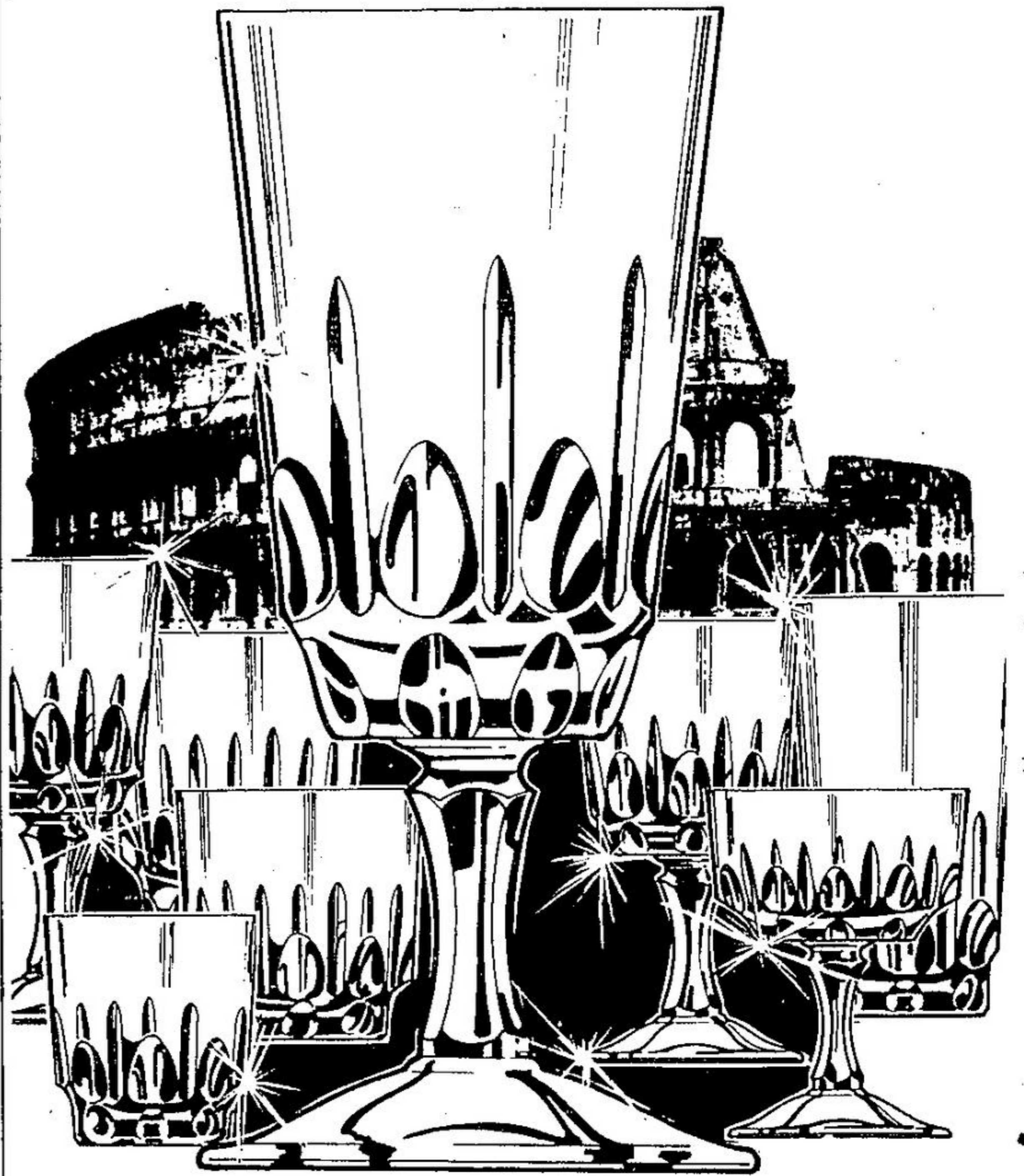
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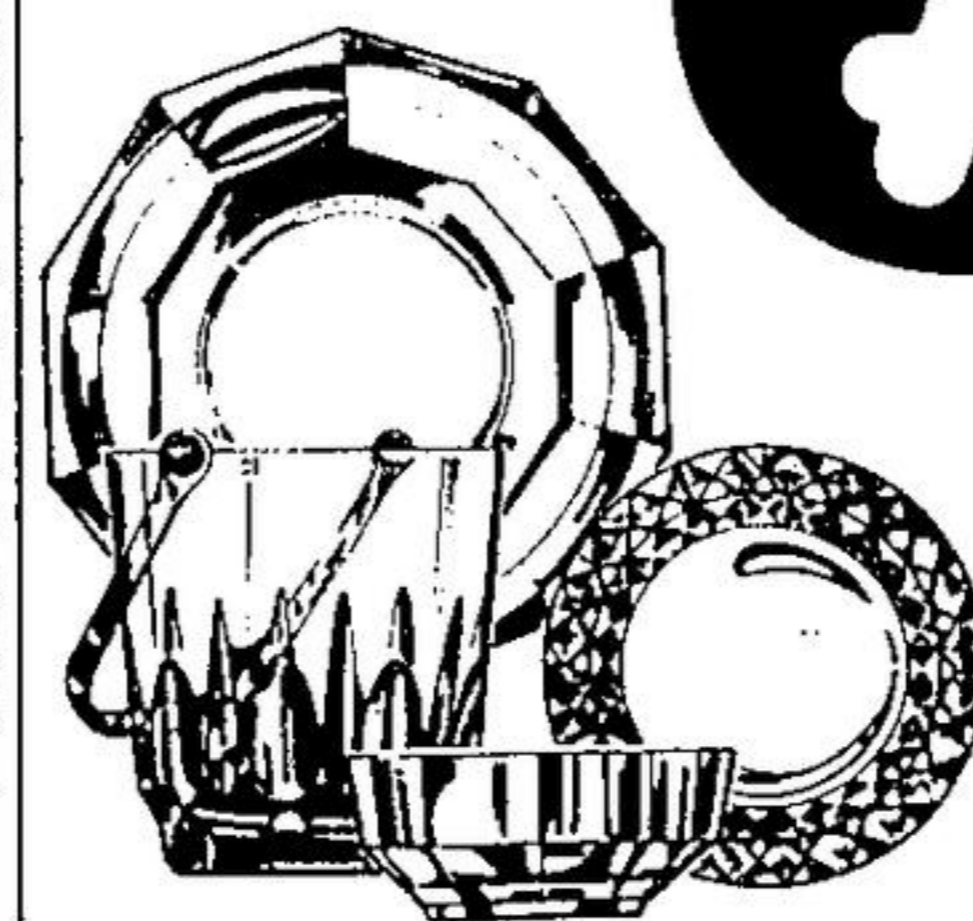
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