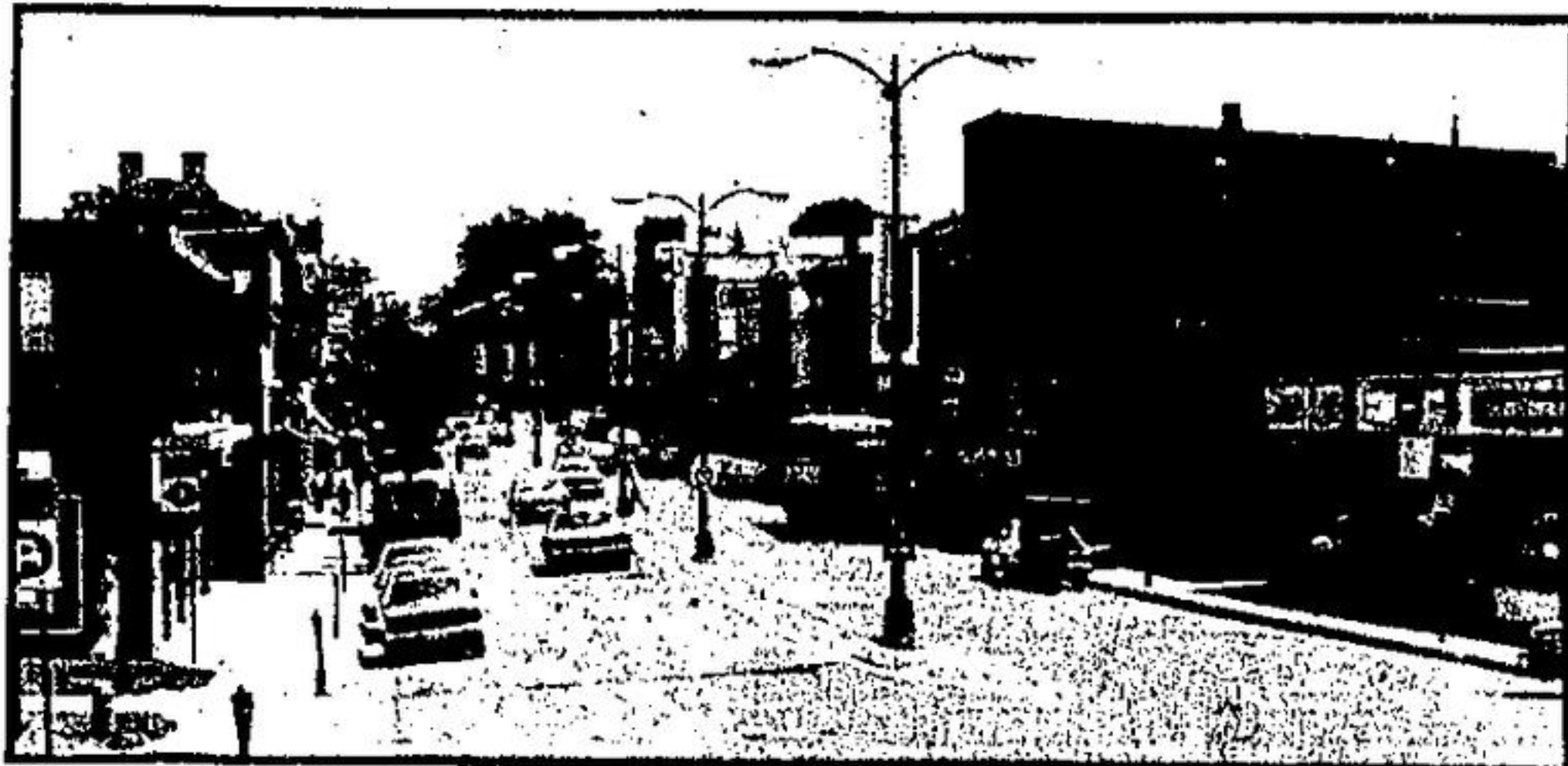


Merchants dig in to fight economic slump

Continued from page A1
 from the downtown community were not very farsighted, Ms. Barnard said, and have ultimately led to the BIA's erosion.
 In fact, the Walker, Wright, Young Associates study on the town's BIAS completed last October suggested that new stores opening in Georgetown's downtown area should offer unique services to the residents rather than compete with retailers in the Guelph Street shopping plazas.
 However, Ms. Barnard said, when councils were busy planning new shopping areas in the 1960s and early 70s, downtown merchants were "not vocal enough" in opposing the plans or at least having them modified with their interests in mind.
SO LONG
 "It's a matter of record," she said. "It's taken so long to get to this point where we are getting money into the downtown area that we don't want to stop. We want to build a new reality for downtown Georgetown and it would



At 4 p.m. on a Friday afternoon, downtown Georgetown looks busy, but merchants are still concerned that not enough residents are taking advantage of what shopping downtown has to offer. By taking their business elsewhere, shoppers are threaten-

ing the survival of Georgetown's historic business centre but merchants are moving to entice new clientele into their stores. (Herald photo)

be really tragic if, at this point, we said there's nothing we can do to boost business."
 Downtown merchants appear to have dug their heels in, having reeled

from the blow the recession has dealt them, there is motion in the backfield suggesting that they intend to launch an offensive, aggressively encouraging more people to shop here.
 When Pioneer Days opens for its fourth anniversary tomorrow (Thursday), it will be larger than ever and there will be few lulls in action during the event's three-day run.
 Merchants will be out to show that they have something to offer to consumers that's hard to come by shopping in large malls.
 In addition, they have been getting together for monthly breakfast meet-

ings, discussing joint marketing campaigns and hearing from people, like Halton region's business development director Matt Fischer, on what they can do to improve sales.
 Bringing his experience as full-time co-ordinator of St. Catharines' downtown core board of management, he has encouraged downtown merchants to share marketing techniques and upgrade their own skills with seminars.
 He has suggested that merchants should continue to advertise to discourage residents from heading out of town to shop and says that downtown merchandising should have a "back to roots" appeal for consumers tired of sterile mall surroundings.

SAME STUFF
 "Shoppers are getting more and more disgruntled with shopping in malls," Mr. Fischer maintained. "They're looking for something different, but very often mall-type shopping offers the same stuff."
 "Downtown areas, because of their unique character, are better suited to specialty stores, catering to one line and maybe even one group of people."
 Business people working out of historic cores of communities can take advantage of a current trend in merchandising, selling to people who have tired of fast-paced environments in which customer service is virtually negligible.
 Downtown merchants, he said, have their work cut out for them because they must try to break a community shopping pattern in which residents tend to frequent plazas and malls. Traditional



Meanwhile, the BIA has decided not to actively pursue new businesses to move into now empty stores by forming a special committee or embarking on an expensive advertising campaign. Instead, BIA efforts will concentrate on making existing businesses more viable and by attracting more shoppers downtown, new businesses might be encouraged to locate there.
 An additional suggestion which arose from the first breakfast meeting about two months ago, called on businessmen to form an advisory panel to help new merchants get a foothold in the downtown marketplace. Drawing from their more experienced neighbors a wealth of marketing know-how, new merchants might be able to do a better job of attracting shoppers and selling products, the theory goes, two things from which the entire downtown area would benefit.

Downtown review continues next week

In coming weeks, The Herald continues to examine the decline of Halton Hills' business community. Store closures in Acton and Georgetown will be discussed with the store owners themselves as well as Mayor Pete Pomeroy, a former downtown merchant himself, and spokesmen for the town's two chambers of commerce. Problems experienced in Acton's downtown core and strip plazas, somewhat different from those of Georgetown, also come under scrutiny as our series "Riding the Recession" continues.

Heritage review board to hear town hall preservation call

Continued from page A1
 ions and recommend whether the designation should stay.

Councillors Pam Shejton and George Maltby have successfully stymied proposals to restore the hall.

But at Monday night's committee meeting, only Coun. Armstrong objected to the review board proposal while fellow committee members who have previously advocated that the building should be torn down, expressed confidence that the town's position would be upheld by the board.
 Hired by the Acton town hall restoration and Actario committees, Mr. Chapman maintained that by advertising its intent to remove the historical designation, the town was following guidelines under the Heritage Act which make it mandatory to submit objections to a board review.
 However, Mr. Richardson pointed out that another section of the Act states that the town is not obliged to consult the board and stressed that even if it did, it will still not be obliged to follow the board's advice.
 He estimated that it would take about three months before the board calls a hearing to discuss the objections raised by town hall restoration proponents, a number of whom joined Actario chairman Ted Tyler at the meeting as Mr. Chapman made his presentation. Nine people wrote to the town's administration during the 30-day period largely arguing that the hall is important to the community's heritage.
 Although far outnumbered, one member of the gallery voiced his opposition to delays in tearing the

hall down. Acton resident Art Gordon said he was tired of seeing the issue drag on for almost five years and called on council to carry out a decision he says it has made three times.
 When the committee decided not to immediately remove the hall's historical designation, he loudly declared "what a gutless bunch".
 Coun. Armstrong insisted that town staff present a report next week, detailing who would be involved in presenting the town's case before the review board and how much the procedure would cost.
 Supporting the review board proposal Mayor Pete Pomeroy said the wording in the advertisements placed last month in The Herald suggested that there would be an "appeal process" if objections to the town's plans were raised within the 30-day period.
 Acton Coun. Ross Knechtel reminded committee members that the people who are ultimately trying to save the hall have no personal or financial gain in mind.
 "It's an affair of the heart," he said. "This is a part of their heritage they desperately want to save."
 Not to support the proposal, Coun. Sheldon maintained, "would make the people of Acton feel their rights have been mis-handled". She added that she feels the town's case will stand regardless of the review board's recommendations.

OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL CLUB HONORS ORDER IN LAW AND ART



The emphasis was on the community's "respect for law" at the Georgetown Optimists dinner meeting last Tuesday night. Club members gathered in one of the banquet rooms at North Halton Golf and Country Club and paid special tribute to Constable William Riddle, a member of the Halton regional force and a Georgetown resident. His work in the force's Youth-Family Section has helped hundreds of young people in conflict with the law and has earned him the respect of parents and co-workers. Const. Riddle was also thanked for his work by Staff Sergeant Les Graham (left). Ian Cowan, a crown attorney for Peel region, was the evening's special guest speaker. Mr. Cowan discussed the ramifications of the country's new charter of rights. (Herald photos by Chris Aagaard)



Georgetown Optimists took time out from their dinner meeting last Tuesday night at the North Halton Golf and Country Club to honor a number of the community's young artists. The winners were among 200 entrants in the club's art contest at Bang-o-Rama last month. They are (front row, left to right) Stacy Sinclair, Amy Norman, John Shaw, Laurie Robbins, (second row) Jodi McClements (receiving the award on behalf of Erin Dyer), Angie Norman, Ross Renaud and Greg Lawrence. They are shown with art contest organizers Kim French and Barb Kochmar and Optimists Stan Nolan, Tom Ramautarsingh and Norm Guthrie. The winners were awarded with plaques. (Herald photo)

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LYNN BARNARD

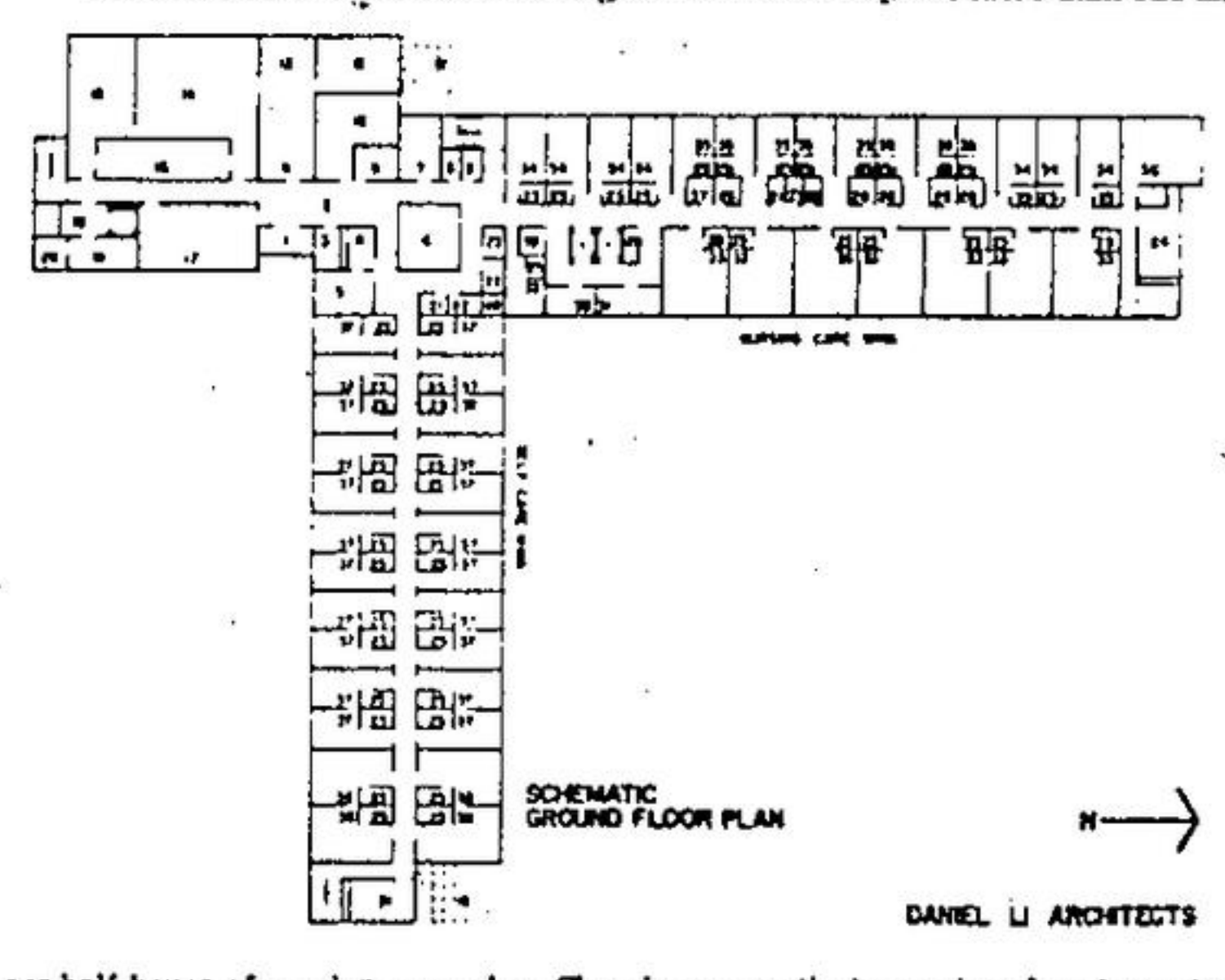
downtown centres are always hardest hit among retailers during periods of economic strife because they often don't have the same purchasing "clout" large chain stores have to help ride out trouble.

Since many of the downtown merchants are renting their shops, the BIA stays in close contact with building landlords, Ms. Barnard said, keeping them informed of the plans for downtown Georgetown's revitalization.

DRASTIC RENT
 Ms. Barnard hopes that by maintaining this contact and stressing that everyone—including building owners—have an investment in the downtown core, drastic rent increases should be avoided.
 Although landlords have mortgages and other costs attributed to maintaining buildings, Ms. Barnard said they should take a "hard look" at what's happening to small businessmen and strive to keep rent increases moderate and gradually scaled over time.

Hospital lauds nursing home's benefits to seniors

By CHRIS AAGAARD
 Herald Staff Writer
 "Several advantages" will be enjoyed by local senior citizens once a 47-bed "extended care" wing planned for the Georgetown and District Memorial Hospital—and endorsed by the province's health ministry Tuesday afternoon—is built, a hospital press release says.
 Hospital administrator Fred Morris told The Herald that elderly citizens in Halton Hills won't have to leave town to find senior citizen care and there should be a significant saving to taxpayers by having the new facilities connected with the hospital, avoiding "duplicated" services.
 The new wing, expected to be completed by the end of 1983, was approved by the ministry, which is responsible for licensing senior citizen extended care homes. Three more "extended care" beds were approved for Burlington's Maple Villa Nursing Home and will be installed immediately.
 Extended care means that a nursing home resident requires more than one and



one-half hours of nursing every day. Chronic care patients require almost constant medical attention.
 Thirty residential beds (for seniors requiring infrequent nursing care) are also planned for the GDMH nursing home and Mr. Morris said that the hospital and the ministry are negotiating for a chronic care wing as well.
 He declined to give estimated costs for the new facility until architects have drafted working drawings.
 Regional officials have noted a continuing demand from senior citizens for more community nursing homes, although Halton does operate a "central" nursing home in Milton.
 Mr. Morris added that the nursing home facility will free other beds in the hospital for "active treatment".
 "Finally, the hospital believed from the start that, in addition to the logical rationalization of services, the hospital site being chosen was more than appropriate for its pleasant and aesthetically pleasing surroundings."

Show 'em how

Halton-Burlington MPP Julian Reed wants Halton to "lead the way" by showing other municipalities and gravel companies how gravel pits should be properly "rehabilitated" instead of being left as unsightly scars in rural areas. In a letter to Halton's mayors, Mr. Reed called on them to identify pits which might be used as good examples to government and industry, stressing that the issue is becoming increasingly important because the province will shortly be labelling a new Pits and Quarries Act. A number of companies extracting gravel from Halton have seeded abandoned pits with grass, cutting down on slope erosion and muddy quagmires.

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