

# Unionville, a place to be copied

Twenty years ago the Region of York had plans for a four-lane highway that would have done away with the Main Street of the village of Unionville near Markham. With some striking exemptions, Unionville was, at that time, an accumulation of quite ordinary old buildings, most of them in need of repair and freshening up.

The planners thought it no great loss if the village street, with its helter skelter look and irregular road allowance, was removed to make room for a wide highway and the usual modern strip development of fast-food restaurants, service stations and plazas.

Fortunately some of the inhabitants thought otherwise. They fought the highway scheme and forced the region to build a by-pass instead. This was the beginning of present day Unionville, a place I had heard much about but never visited until last week.

When you come into Unionville you have difficulties believing this is a village in Ontario close to Toronto.

What is totally missing is the desperate ugliness of the usual shopping strip in the Toronto area.

The shopping strips around here are strictly places for commerce. Not a penny is spent to make the street itself, as well as the parking lots, attractive. Not a flower or tree or bench or fountain is in sight anywhere. On our Delrex Plaza here in town, for instance, we have flowerbeds that are filled with tar! I cannot imagine that anybody would go to these places to have a good time. You drive there, do your shopping, trundle your cart full of plastic bags to your car, and get the hell out. No wonder we have the problem of vandalism.

The armies of unemployed youngsters must be maddened by these sterile surroundings. We must show them that we can create beauty worth preserving and caring for.

In Unionville, by comparison, you want to linger forever. Like our old Main Street here in Georgetown, Unionville Main Street has grown over many years and because of that it is now a lesson in history. But the merchants of Unionville have done one better. They declared the whole street and the surrounding area a heritage district.

This done, they started to transform the street, by careful renovation and new, blended-in additions, into the kind of place you want to return to and wander around in, after you went there



## Ideas and The Arts

by John Sommer

for the first time.

As it is I can hardly wait to get back there for the Unionville Harvest Festival on September 21.

The moment you park your car on one of the nicely tended, tree-shaded parking lots, you encounter delightful things you want to photograph and, in this way, take home with you: A profusion of flowers and shrubs, daily watered and looked after by gardeners, flowers in hanging and standing pots, as well as in beds and window boxes. Also, outstanding shop signs, carved in wood or fabricated in metal, artistic window displays, cool beer gardens, many indoor and outdoor restaurants, a mill with a turning wooden wheel, and cafe terraces studded with colorful sun umbrellas, as well as many fine old buildings lovingly restored and added to.

Everywhere are benches for the footsore, and, in good

weather, the merchants come out and chat with you when you are resting in front of their shops.

None of the tourist villages like Elora and St. Jacobs, to name two, comes close to Unionville, in my opinion.

Could we here do as well? I am sure of it. The merchants of Main Street in Georgetown made a brave beginning. What is needed now is more of the same, as well as imaginative apartment houses downtown that continue and enhance the unique flavor of the place. The wrong kind of development, high rise buildings for instance, could quickly destroy what has been done so far.

On our way home we stopped in downtown Bolton to have a look at the "Courtyards of Caledon". This is a new shopping centre with the difference being it is not standing in a field somewhere, but has been integrated into the fabric of Bolton.

The place has been given an instant patina, which made me think that it was an old building recycled, but it is brand new. A lot of good ideas are manifest in this venue.

There are trees and fountains and terraces with benches for sitting in the sun. There is an Italianate feeling about the place that is very pleasant. It is a very photogenic development and I came home with a splendid set of photographs. But is has nothing but shops and offices. What is missing is the people who live right there.



## THE CORPORATION OF THE Town of Halton Hills

1 Halton Hills Drive — P.O. Box 128  
HALTON HILLS (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 5G2  
873-2600

### CONTRACT P-91-C-3 RECONSTRUCTION OF MAPLE AVENUE C.N.R. HALTON SUBDIVISION TO RIVER DR.

Sealed tenders, clearly marked as to contents, will be received by the Purchasing Department at the Civic Centre, 1 Halton Hills Drive, Halton Hills (Georgetown), until 12:00 noon Local Time:

Tuesday, July 30, 1991

for the Reconstruction of Maple Avenue.

The major items of construction are:

Earth Excavation and Grading	4,400 cubic metres
Granular 'B'	3,150 tonnes
Granular 'A'	1,890 tonnes
Hot Mix Asphalt	430 tonnes
Concrete Curb	800 linear metres
Concrete Sidewalk	560 square metres
750 mm Storm Sewer and related structures	15 metres
825 mm Storm Sewer and related structures	310 metres
1050 mm Storm Sewer and related structures	60 metres
300 mm dia. P.V.C. Watermain and related appurtances	440 linear metres
Topsail, Sod and Seeding	4,850 square metres

Plans, Specifications and Form of Tender may be obtained from the office of the Town's Purchasing Department upon payment of a thirty dollar (\$30.00) non-refundable deposit.

A certified cheque in the amount specified in the tender documents must accompany each tender.

Inquiries relating to the project should be directed to Mr. R.A. Goddard, C.E.T., Engineering Technologist, Engineering Department at 873-2600, extension 310 or Mr. J. Lyle, P. Eng., D.S. Lea Associates at 299-9050.

Tenders will be opened at 12:05 p.m., Tuesday, July 30, 1991 at the Civic Centre, 1 Halton Hills Drive, Halton Hills (Georgetown). Those submitting tenders are invited to attend.

Lowest or any tender not necessarily accepted.

Town of Halton Hills  
P.O. Box 128  
Halton Hills (Georgetown)  
Ontario  
L7G 5G2

Ad. No. 1433

## Graduate



Donald R.J. Anderson graduated with Honors from the Rehabilitation Worker Program at Humber College on June 18, 1991. During his studies he received two awards for academic and professional excellence. Accompanied by his guide dog Eager, Donald is currently competing for a position within the Provincial Government's Public Service. Congratulations to Donald and Eager, love, from your family.

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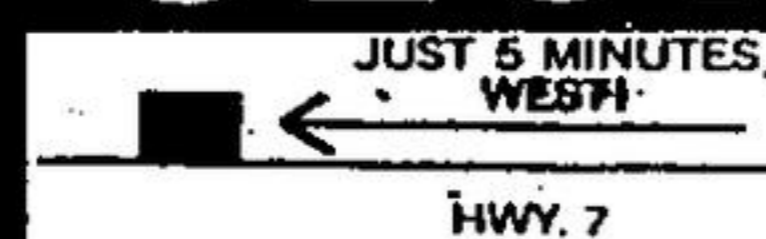
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