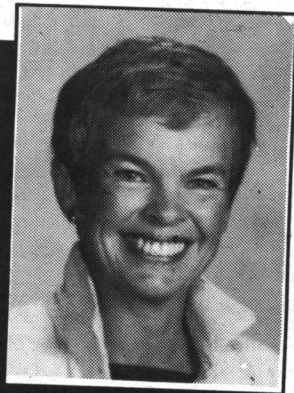




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Local residents battle "monster house"

By Oksana Buhel

Even though Town of Halton Hills councillors voted Monday to accept the tempered planning department "monster house" report, area resident Glenn Scott, backed by a 75-person petition, insisted he will still appeal the decision before the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

"The planning department supported us right down the line," Scott, spokesperson of the Queen, Union, Albert, King and Murdock streets Emergency Committee, complained. "Then an unidentified solicitor gives his report and all of a sudden the planning department is praising the project."

The project Scott was referring to is the Victorian-style home at 56 Queen St. in Georgetown which is currently in use as an apartment building. The applicant, Cardno Realty Ltd., had put in an application with the town committee of adjustments to enlarge the existing property by six units, which would increase the area of the structure by 98 per cent. The application was approved Oct. 6 and the appeal deadline was yesterday (Friday).

Scott claimed his committee's concerns were being "white-washed by a rush, rush little system to hurry up the process."

He also complained that municipal planner, Arvin Prasad's, report was peppered with "numerous inaccurate figures and unfair statements." "If I made an application like that, with all sorts of wrong numbers or missing information, I'd be quickly ushered to the door," he said.

Prasad's report mentioned an increase of 75 per cent, but Scott pointed out this did not include the requested parking garage, which increased the extension to 98 per cent.

"This is not a reasonable increase," Scott insisted. "It's more than a monster house."

Scott was concerned about the amount of high density crowding in his area. "We certainly do not oppose rental units per se," he insisted. "Just their disproportionate cluster-



Gail Rutherford

ing." Scott also complained about the crowded parking and the lack of parkland dedication. He concluded by asking council to support his appeal before the OMB.

Bert Arnold, solicitor for Cardno, informed councillors Scott had "no grounds for appeal" because the application procedure followed was lawful. He added concerns about the magnitude of the structure can be addressed at the following stage of processing - site plan.

Councillor Gail Rutherford pointed out site plan may address certain public concerns, but not architectural details. She also asked Arnold if the introduction of a 20 units per acre (upa) in a 12 upa area might be viewed as a precedent. (The 15 units will be located on three-quarters of an acre.)

"No," Arnold quickly responded. Councillor Bill Robson wondered if the committee of adjustments was the appropriate venue for the particular application (Cardno could have also applied for re-zoning, or requested a by-law authorizing the extension of the structure beyond existing boundaries.)

"I was under the impression the committee of adjustments dealt with minor variances,"

Robson said. "Ninety-eight per cent can hardly be viewed as minor."

Arnold explained the committee deals with expansions of legal non-conforming uses as well as minor variances but admitted, "it often comes down to a numbers game."

Rutherford suggested council file an objection to the application with the OMB. This would have given councillors enough time to read the confidential legal memo circulated a few minutes before the meeting by John Schaljo, a solicitor contacted by the Town, to advise councillors of the legality of the committee of adjustment procedures.

Councillor Pam Johnston insisted the memo could be read during the 10-minute break, and Councillor Norm Elliott "defied anyone who could not figure out the crystal clear essence of the report in three minutes."

Councillor Ron Chatten did not agree. "If the information is so important," he said, "it should have been left in our bundles Friday afternoon. Now I'm even more upset to find I've been given information and not allowed to study it."

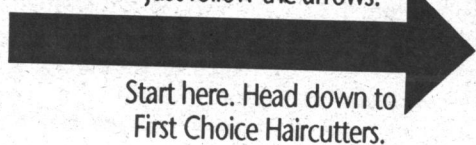
Councillor Robson agreed, suggesting other councillors "not hide behind the solicitor's opinion and vote for what (they) believe in."

A sufficient number of councillors did not share their view. The motion to file an objection was defeated 7-5.

Scott was disappointed but not crushed. "I'm still going (to the OMB)," he said.

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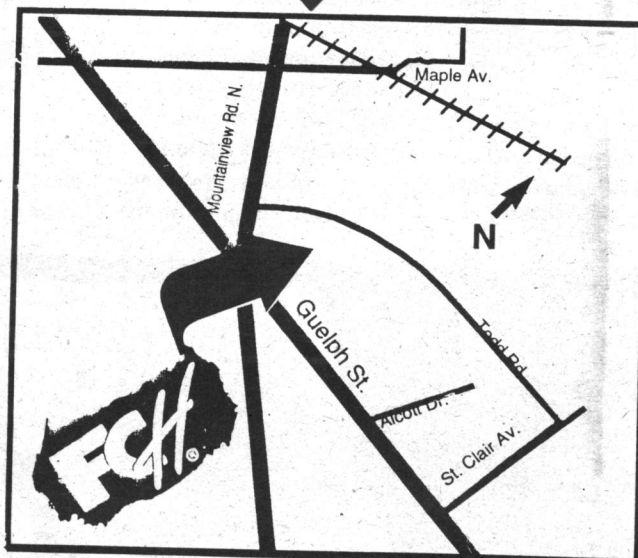
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 - 3) Lala and Mike Ransoz;
 - 4) Tie - Doris Barber and Adele Glavicic; George Sargent and Jack Kaarsemaker

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