

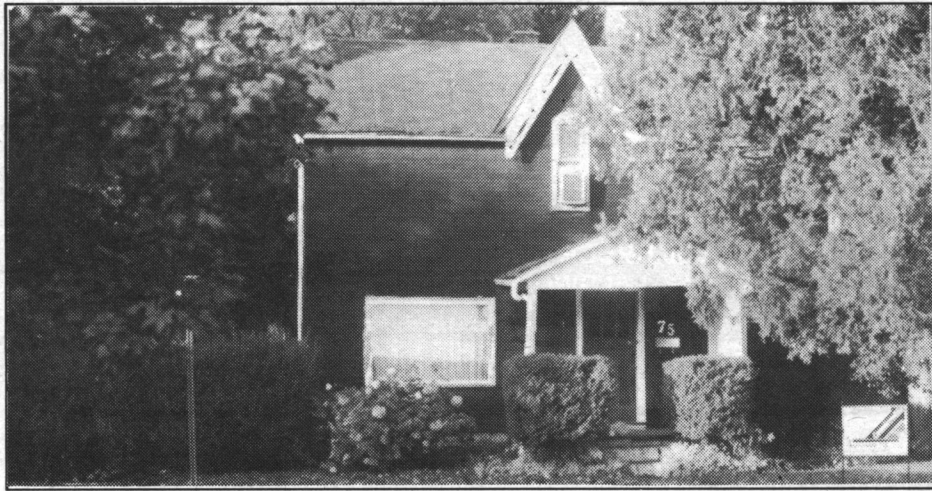


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**Sewell's report rejected by builders' group**

The proposals contained in the Final Report of the Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario make housing and economic growth a secondary priority and would increase the time and cost involved in obtaining planning approvals, according to the Greater Toronto Home Builders' Association (GTHBA).  
 "The Commission purports

to have addressed the need for cutting red tape through the inclusion of a short chapter on streamlining, however we believe that on the whole, its proposed planning model would exacerbate, not improve, the situation," said GTHBA President Murray Koebel.

"The Commission's call for more studies, increased public participation, intervener fund-

ing, etc. would stall the process and increase costs," said Koebel. "Now, with a fragile economic recovery emerging, is the time for fewer rules, not more," he said.

According to Laurie Gordon, Chair of the GTHBA Sewell Commission Task Force, Sewell's planning model lacks balance and is not supported by any cost-benefit analysis.

"Ontario needs a planning system that recognizes that growth pressure exists and new areas will need to be urbanized. The purpose of planning is to develop communities in a manner that safeguards the environment while taking into account other important priorities, all within a framework of cost-effectiveness," she said.

"The planning system in Ontario is already one of the most expensive and bureaucratic in North America, and the recommendations of the Commission would make it even more so."

Koebel remarked that the GTHBA believes the best approach would be to move cautiously from current practice.

"We see little reason to believe that the recommendations of the Commission will assist the industry to build better communities that adequately safeguard the natural environment in a cost-effective manner. The need to proceed with implementing most of the recommendations of the Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario has not been justified by the Commission," said Koebel.



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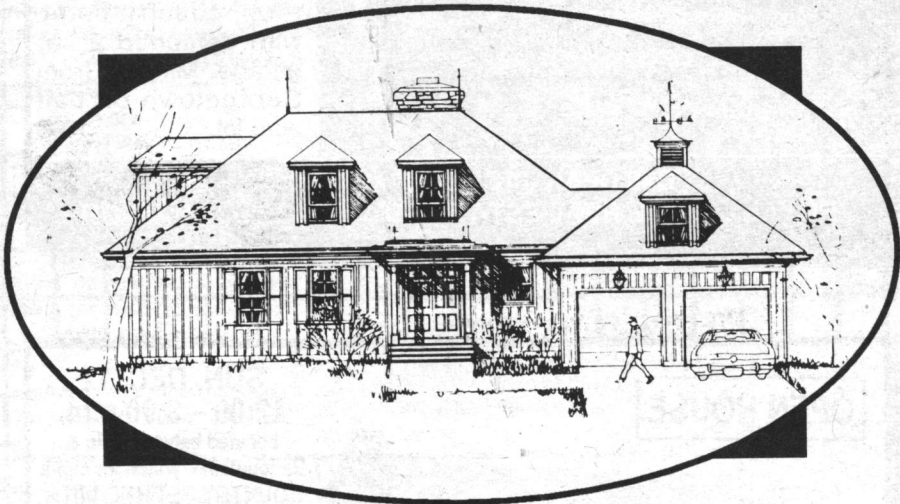
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