

Think ahead if you're planning major renovations

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Does your home need a facelift? If so, you'll probably want to hire a contractor to do the renovation work. But before you sign on the dotted line of any contract, there are several things you should know.

When planning any type of renovation, it's essential to have a clear idea of what you want to do and how much money you want to spend. Once you put your ideas on paper, you can start to get your project underway.

Depending on the nature of the work you want done, you may also want to consult an architect to help you develop formal plans. Additional consultants may also have to be approached for technical assistance.

If you have a good working knowledge of house construction and have a lot of time to devote to your renovation project, you may want to act as your own contractor and subcontract the various tasks involved to qualified professionals. This requires a great deal of organizational skill, but you can save money.

If you have neither the time nor the talent to do this, you'll have to hire a professional. Contractors usually have a crew of individuals to do the basic renovation work,

while specialized tasks like wiring and plumbing are subcontracted to professionals in those fields.

Do Your Homework: Once you're ready to shop around for a good contractor, take the time to do a little homework before making a decision about who you're going to hire. Ask your architect for names of suitable people.

Talk to friends and relatives about renovation work they've had done. If they are pleased with the outcome, get the names of the contractors they used. You can also contact your local home builders' association to get names of renovation contractors.

Then contact these firms and get their business licence numbers. Also make sure they carry up-to-date public liability and property insurance.

You may also want to phone the Better Business Bureau in your area to see if any complaints have been filed against any of the contractors on your list. If at all possible, view the sites of other projects and get references from satisfied clients.

Once you've confirmed the status of these

firms, pick three to supply cost estimates for your project. Give all three the same information about your project so they can give you accurate quotes. You should also include any special considerations in the information you supply to the bidders, such as time constraints, cleaning provisions, and so on.

Your decision shouldn't rest solely on the lowest bid; in some cases, an exceptionally low bid can mean the costs haven't been properly estimated. Consider all the quotes carefully before making your decision. You should also get references for these contractors and check them.

It's important to trust the person you select.

The Contract: Once you have chosen a contractor, you'll have to sign a contract.

This document should include all pertinent information, including a detailed account of the work to be done — including any subcontracting work, and any warranties.

It should also include a list of any permits which are required and an outline of who is

responsible for obtaining them. (Homeowners should check with city hall before the project gets under way to make sure there will be no problem in obtaining the necessary permits, and to ascertain which permits are required.)

Renovation contracts should also include the overall cost of the work to be done and any payment terms, as well as the beginning and finishing dates of the project.

Keep in mind that there are bound to be some minor modifications made to the project as it progresses. Any amendments should be documented by both the homeowner and the contractor, so all costs can be accounted for.

You should also pay attention to the terms of payment before signing a contract. Some contracting firms require a deposit; other may not. Interim payments may apply to bigger jobs, but only after certain phases of work have been done.

□ This article is provided by local realtors and the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) for the benefit of consumers in the real estate market.

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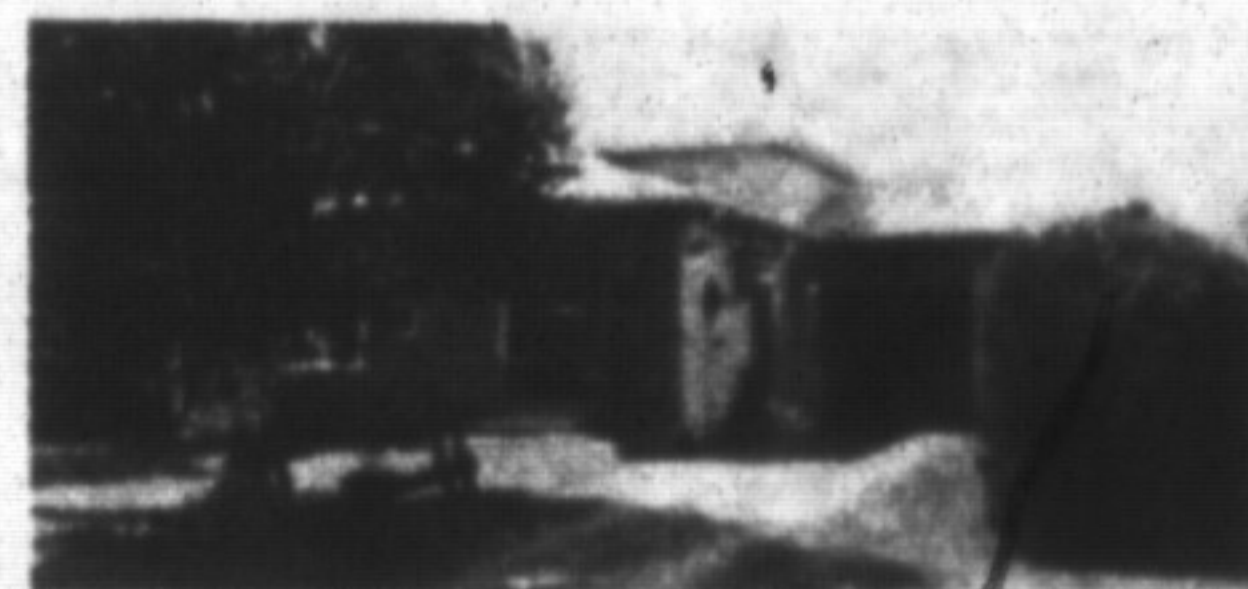
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CABOT TRAIL

Very nice 3 bedroom home featuring nursery, finished rec. room, located on large lot in quiet part of town. Price \$194,900. Call Paul Page at 878-2365.



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THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG!

So much to tell... so little space. Here is a brief "sketch", 10 acres with about 1000 apple trees, large elegant home with fabulous Barzotti kitchen, built-in appliances, sitting area & stove. The finished lower level has a games room, giant rec. room with 2nd fireplace, office & bathroom. This property offers so many options with its 3 barns, stable, paddock & half-mile track. For full details call Jean \$750,000.



THE POWER OF A DOLLAR

Just got stronger! Look at this value... this spacious home has a large eat-in kitchen with oak cupboards, family room with fireplace & walk-out to private yard with deck and entertainment area, a den or 4th bdrm., hobby room and additional cold cellar. The central air and central vacuum add a great bonus. Call Jean. \$209,000.



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118 LAURIER

Large corner lot, 4 bdrms., fireplace, fam. room, large kitchen.



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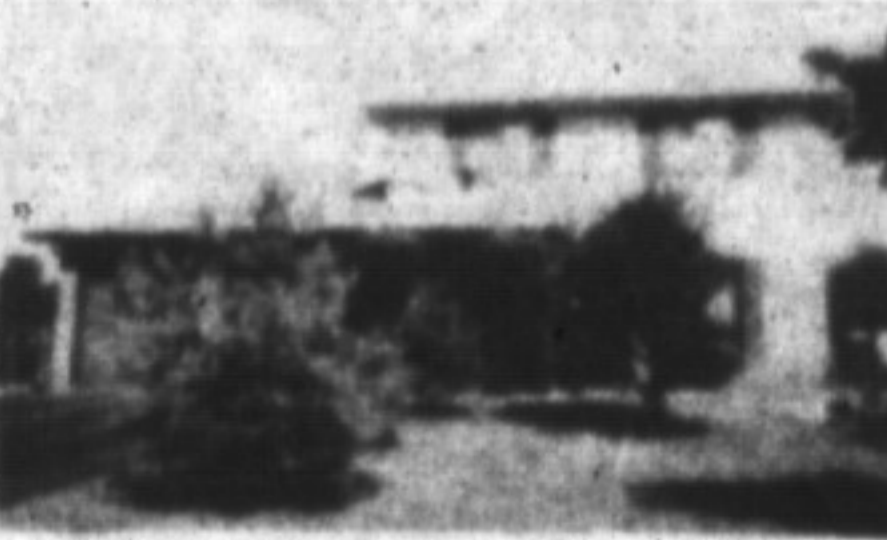
CONVENIENT COUNTRY

Nestled in its own half-acre, secluded but not isolated, this charming Tudor style split-level home is only minutes from 401 at Trafalgar, but far enough away for you to hear the birdsong. Features family room with fireplace, central air. Convenient for Milton and Georgetown GO Train services. Priced reduced to \$264,900. Call Audrey for your personal viewing.



EXECUTIVE TWO-STORY TOWNHOME

Cool with central air, spacious living room and dining room, big master bedroom, finished rec. room. All in excellent condition and decorated in neutral earth tones. No multi-level stairways to tire you out. Garage. Large and private fenced back yard. \$149,500. See it with Audrey.



EXCLUSIVE COURT LOCATION

Super detached two-story 3-4 bedroom home on 60 ft. x 110 ft. landscaped lot with 30 ft. x 16 ft. kidney shaped inground pool. This home has everything: family room with fireplace, spacious rec room with fireplace, central air and vac. etc. A beautifully clean home you must see. \$279,900. Call Audrey.



BIG HOUSE, SMALL PRICE

Super big backsplit with 2 car garage. 4 bedrooms provide accommodation for a large or space-hungry family. One bedroom is on the ground floor and with the adjacent family room and bathroom lends itself to use as a teen or granny area. Features central air, fireplace, air-cleaner, large kitchen with oak cabinetry. Very reasonable priced at \$209,900. See it with Audrey.



BUILT TO LAST

All brick oversize bungalow built when a 2 x 4 was just that, on a 60 ft. x 120 ft. lot. Three main floor bedrooms, hardwood floors. Basement is finished with rec. room, den and study/bedroom. The very private back yard sports a floodlit 16 ft. x 32 ft. inground pool plus a large concrete patio with sunroof. A great investment at \$189,900. Tour it with Audrey.

1.4 ACRES

In the lovely village of Moffat. Part of an area of prestigious country homes. This lot slopes up from the road enabling you to build on a knoll. \$159,900. Owner may hold advantageous mortgage. Call Audrey.

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878-5339 or 878-2365



VILLAGE SETTING

Overlooks pond. Solid older brick home, 3 bdrms., large kitchen, family room, sep. living & dining rooms. All reasonable offers considered. Listed at \$249,000. Call Carol or Alan Brooks.



VENDOR RETIRING

Park like setting, enormous back yard, sidesplit, 3+ bedrooms, eat-in kitchen, hardwood floors, 2 baths. Reduced \$210,000. Call Carol or Alan Brooks.



28.4 ACRES

Make Your Offer! Hobby farm, stone house, 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, good barn, good pasture for horses. Call Carol or Alan Brooks.



GUELPH LINE

Property suited for many uses excellent stone house fully restored, many good outbuildings. Call Carol or Alan Brooks.