

# Real Estate / Business

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## Little things mean a lot when buying a new home

**EDITOR'S Note:** This is the fourth in a series on purchasing a home. While it is primarily designed for the first-time buyer, even experienced buyers should not discount the possibilities that they may overlook something. Part four is on upgrading a new home.

By **DON ATANASOFF**  
News Editor

"Buying a home is like a marriage — little things mean a lot."

Those are the words of Cheri Strathee, a land market analyst and consultant to home buyers and investors.

Ms. Strathee, who has a degree in urban planning and who also holds a real estate licence, is currently writing a book on the subject of buying a home. She has definite ideas of how to make things better, without shelling out too many extra dollars.

"If you don't specify exactly what you want in the contract, some builders will change the specifications," Ms. Strathee began.

For example, the Schedule A calls for a circular staircase handrail to be solid oak (as per builder's printed contract). Instead, a builder might substitute one piece solid oak for laminated solid oak.

There are two very important things to remember when making a deal," continued Ms. Strathee. "One is your signature means money. Don't sign anything until you take it to your lawyer."

"After signing a contract, make all requests (deficiencies) and changes on paper. Do not do it verbally. Make the requests in triplicate, one for your files, one for your lawyer and one for the builder."

"In other words," Ms. Strathee warns, "buy steak — not just the sizzle."

Ms. Strathee says she has hundreds of tips on what to put into a contract before signing. Some are to guarantee that what is specified will be installed, but others are ways of improving things like heating, plumbing and electrical services, with a minimum of cost to the home buyer. She suggests looking into having many of these items written into the agreement.

- Insist on pop-up stainless steel plugs — not rubber ones.
- Washerless taps.
- Strainer plugs in the kitchen sink.
- Specify washable paint, one coat of primer and how many coats of regular paint. Touchups should be the whole wall and not just a portion.
- Have the builder leave extra tiles (specify the number), one gallon of flat and one gallon of semi-gloss paint.
- Make sure all rough in wiring such as telephone, intercom, cable television, central air conditioning and vacuuming, dishwasher, etc. goes to the breaker box and is not left hanging in the basement.
- Insist on first quality broadloom and underpad. It will cost some money, but the buyer will receive a credit for the broadloom that wasn't installed.
- When carpeting the stairs, demand French capping (tacking under the stair ledge instead of at the bottom).
- If the house has ceramic tile, make sure monocottura tiles are used. Monocottura means curing the glaze and the biscuit together (one curing) rather than independently. It gives a harder finish and is more resistant to damage.
- If the buyer wants a gas barbecue outlet installed, have it done at the same time as the furnace to save ripping things up to do it later.
- Have additional electrical outlets installed for items like microwaves, dishwashers, instant hot water, wall ovens, etc.
- Flooring should go right to the wall where appliances like dishwashers are, going so the appliance goes in level and doesn't tilt toward the wall.
- Have range vented horizontally rather than vertically.
- Specify that a flange sink be installed and specify the number of holes for accessories such as vegetable spray, soap dispenser, etc.
- Ask that the returns for air conditioning and heating vents are size 5 in small rooms and size six in the large ones. Large bedrooms, or other rooms a long distance from the furnace and air conditioning unit, should have double vents in the room.
- If a patio is part of the contract, specify the number of stones.
- Have roughed-in plumbing in basement done making sure the U-shape pipe is below the concrete and not left hanging in midair.
- In the garage, make sure a rough-in is done for an automatic opener, and insist that dry wall be used.
- Ask for the 'R' factor of the insulation being used. Pay to have an 'R' factor greater than municipal standards installed.
- Specify a high efficiency furnace.

Although some of the preceding extras may cost the purchaser money, the cost will be added to the purchase price of the home. However, many will save the buyer money in the long run and increase the resale value of the home.

If the buyer has a limited amount of money to buy extras or make changes, purchase things you can never change such as an extra high basement, quality insulation, extra electrical outlets and sturdier wooden beams.

Next, buy things that are hard to change such as an upgraded furnace, heater in fireplace and built in extra plumbing.

Finally, purchase items like upgraded sinks, faucets, light fixtures and carpets.



CHERI STRATHEE



This home in the Goodwood area looks like it might be 100 years old thanks to its design. But really, it was built just two years ago. The seven-room house on just over an acre of land is the Economist and Sun's Home of the Week.

### Home of the Week

## A home with rustic charm



The main bathroom, which is upstairs, has many bright and modern features including a skylight and a sunken tub.

What appears like a century-old farmhouse on a nicely wooded lot near Uxbridge, is actually a new, custom-built 1982 home built from reclaimed brick. The seven-room home is just off the third concession south of Goodwood and surrounded by a 600-acre private club. The lot is just over an acre with mature trees and shrubbery enhancing its beauty.

There are two streams crossing the lot and a lake can be seen through the trees. It all makes for a very private retreat.

Entering through the front door, there is a large ceramic tiled foyer with an oak staircase leads to the upstairs. To the right there is a formal sitting room and to the left a family room. In the back of the house is a large country style kitchen with a centre work island and solarium style dining area. The main features here are solid oak kitchen cupboards

complete this area. Also on the main floor is a laundry room and a two-piece bathroom.

Upstairs the large master bedroom comes with an ensuite bathroom and shower stall. The main bathroom features a sunken tub and a skylight. Two other bedrooms complete the upstairs.

Other features in the home include Pella windows and doors, six-inch insulation in the walls, 10" in the ceiling, a forced-air electric furnace, an ever-flowing artesian well and a septic system, a rental watersoftener and an electronic air cleaner. The home is also completely broadloomed.

The listing broker is J.M. Farquharson Realty Ltd. of Stouffville and the agent, as well as being the vendor, is John Walley. Asking price is \$159,000. For more information call 473-3600, 640-4006 or 640-4151.

### Photos and story by Sjoerd Witteveen



When entering the foyer of the house, there is a formal sitting room to the right, a family room to the left or an oak staircase to the upstairs.

## Board of Trade picks new council

Roy Tower is the new president of the Markham Board of Trade.

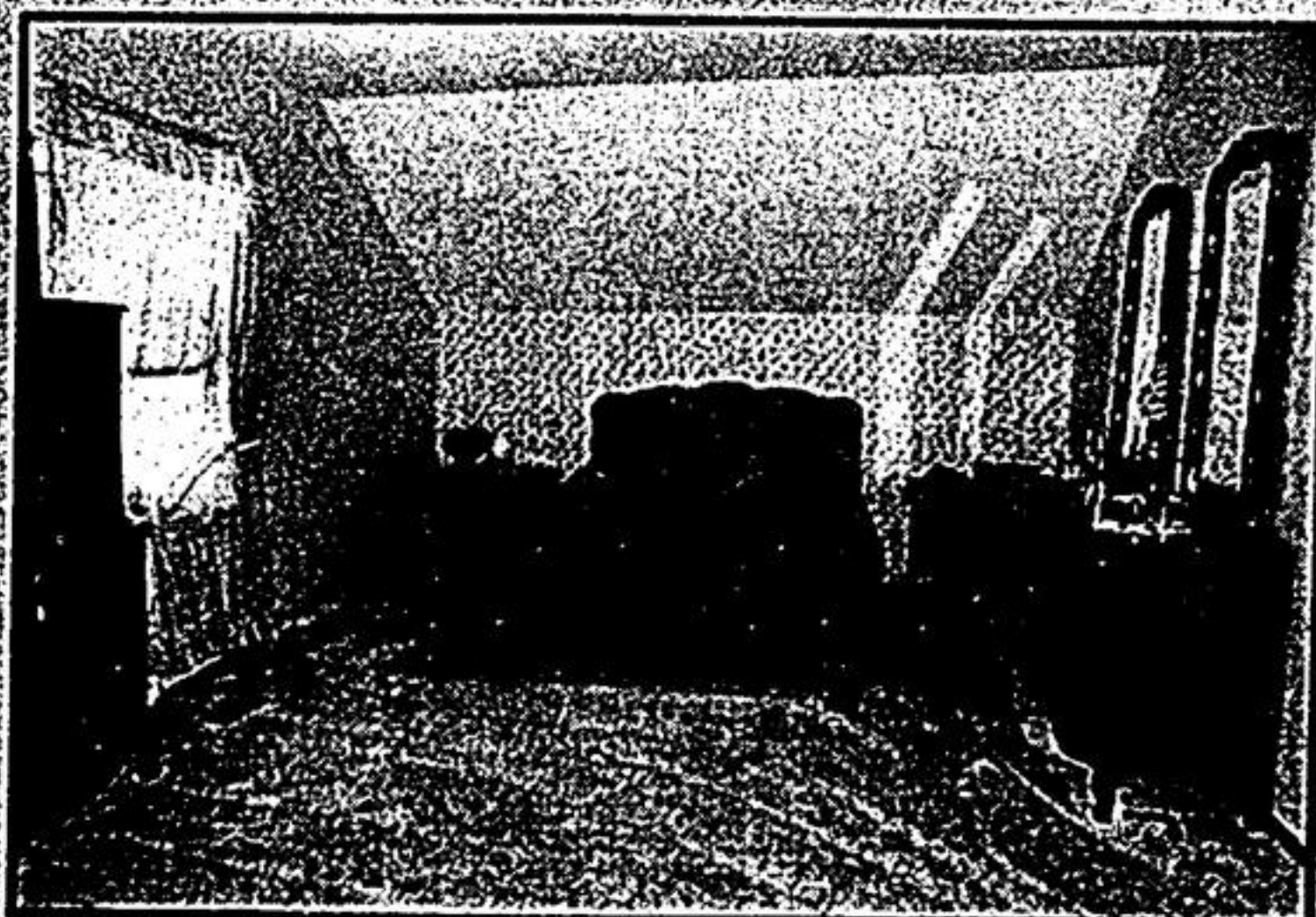


ROY TOWER  
New president

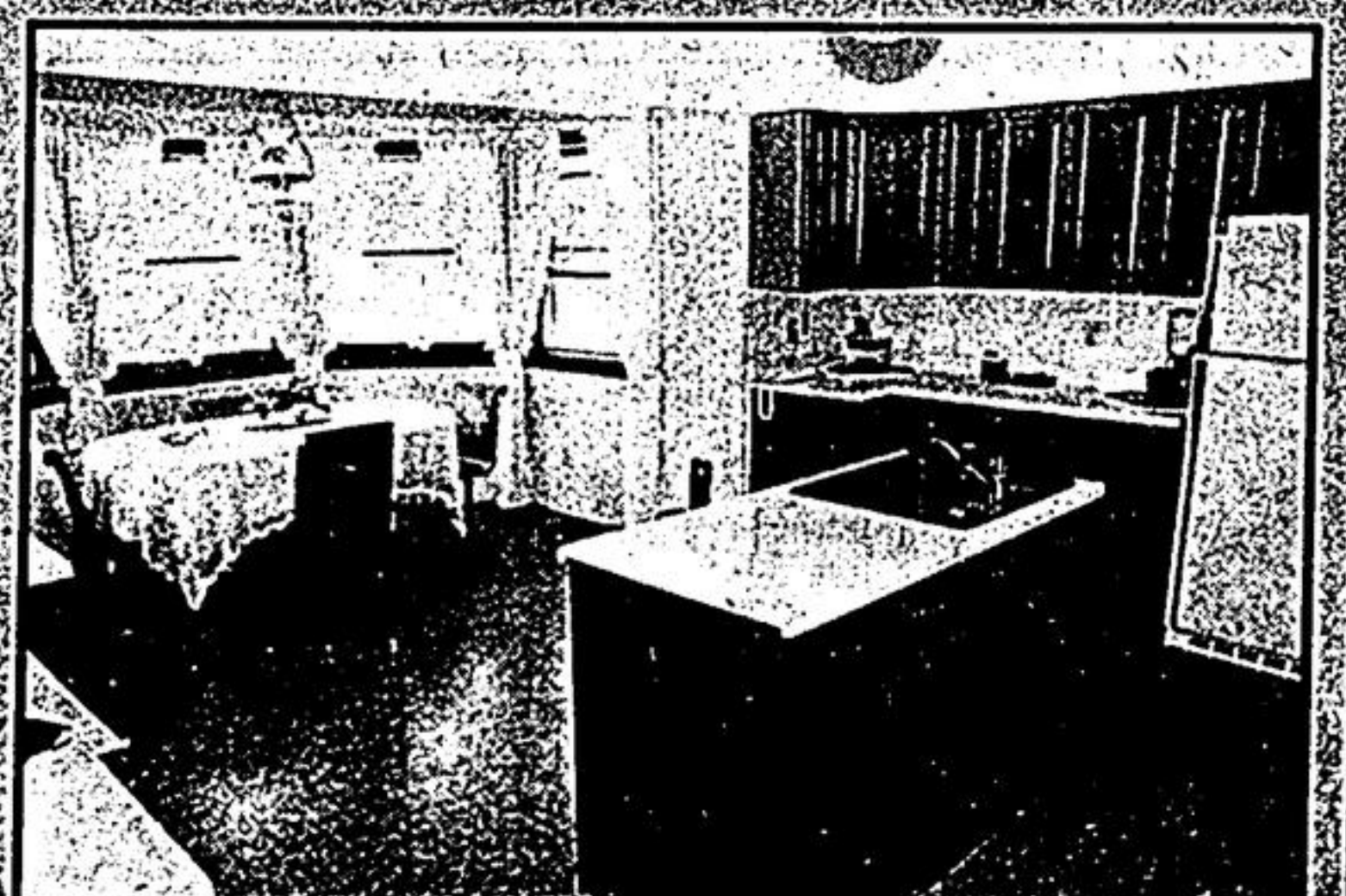
Mr. Tower was elected at an annual general meeting June 20. He replaces Dorothy Mason who will now serve as past-president.

Other 1984-85 council executive members include: Paul Switzer, first vice-president; Brian Wallace, second vice-president; George Denier, treasurer; and Erla Kulba, secretary.

Directors for the Markham Board of Trade's 1984-85 term are Harvey Dorsey, Jim Fry, Hugh Graham, Roy McCutcheon, Art Moad, Mary Muir, Angela Piper, Bruce Patterson, Steve Pozel, Bill Scott, Colin Shimmin, Paul Smith and Douglas Woolsey.



The master bedroom is large and roomy and features an ensuite bathroom and shower stall. The house also has two other bedrooms on the upstairs level.



A large food preparing area and a solarium in the dining area are the mainstays of the kitchen. Solid oak cupboards have also been installed.