

No 'cookie cutter' plaza

His \$10 million dream comes true

He had a \$10 million dream. Markham Village Lanes three years ago was just a mere idea in the mind of Manny Elkind.

For years, he had taken part in the proliferation of many familiar yet utilitarian modern shopping malls. He decided that it was time for something different than what he calls "cookie cutter" plazas.

With only 30 shops, the retail enclave on Main St. is certainly no competitor with the large shopping centres.

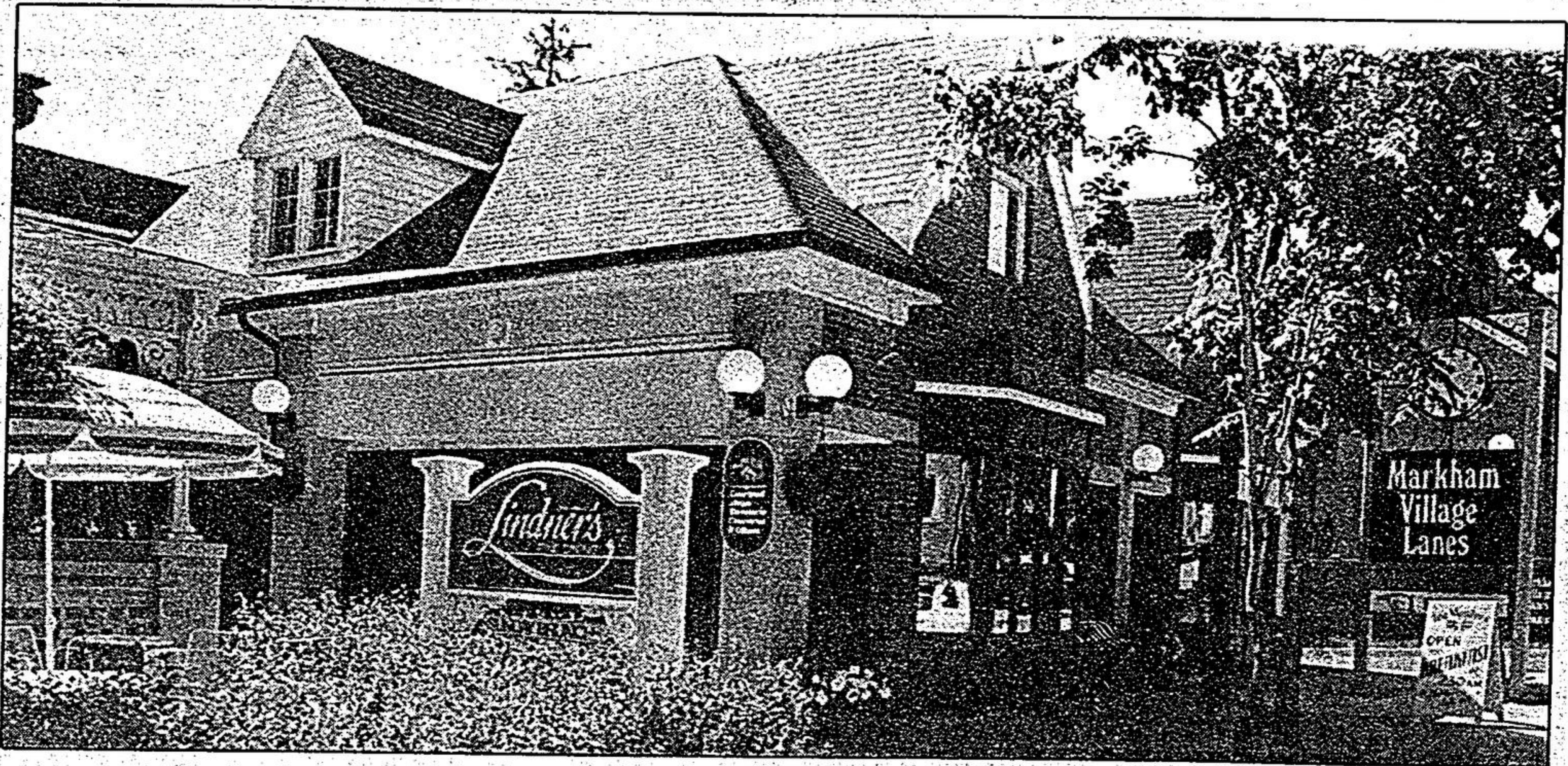
Instead, he felt that Markham Village Lanes had a niche of its own that could blend in well with the historic flavor of the Old Town of Markham.

The variety of shops include a Heritage home converted into a restaurant and banquet hall, a women's fitness centre, a convenience store, a lingerie boutique, a gift shop, a women's fashion store, and a variety of offices. He noted that each merchant is responsible for the costs arising from renovations.

By next summer, the Town of Markham has plans to improve the street walks and putting the overhead cables and wires underground thereby enhancing Main Street's ambience and charm, he added.

When Mr. Elkind approached Mayor Carole Bell and city planners with his proposal the response was one of enthusiasm.

"They felt that because of the major regular shopping centres the street was losing out."



Markham Village Lanes plaza, which opened last fall, offers 30 stores on Markham's Main St. Developer Manny Elkind

Mr. Elkind shared the municipalities' concern. "I saw that the Town of Markham should not be wasted."

Armed with market studies on the demographics and needs of residents in the Markham area and the common sense that comes with a long involvement in the retail merchandise marketing trade, he has come to the conclusion that "...there is a definite change in buying attitudes."

"People are more sophisticated, knowledgeable and aware today," he explained.

"There is a major segment of the community that wants to spend a little more time in areas where they can feel more comfortable and relaxed," he said.

"Even in picking out what flowers are going to hang outside receives a lot of attention so that just the right atmosphere and feeling is created."

wanted to create a different kind of plaza to complement the old village's atmosphere.

Determining which tenants would eventually set up shop at Markham Village Lanes was one of the most crucial and difficult tasks, he said.

"We want shopowners that have a sense of pride and accomplishment with long-term goals."

Mr. Elkind described the majority of his tenants as "...young first time retailers who are building a business rather than a livelihood."

Many of the Village Lanes shopkeepers chosen are more likely to derive greater satisfaction from owning a business that offers a top quality service or product in pleasant surroundings, he said, than those who don't care about the product they sell or are just concerned about making quick profits.

Markham Village Lanes, at 144 Main St. N., also has ample parking for more than 230 cars.

Not a male preserve

Women only at this local fitness club

Fitness clubs, until recently, have been strictly a man's world; a veritable 'no-woman's' land.

Markham Village Women's Club, in the heart of Markham Village Lanes, gives women the opportunity to get into shape in an environment where they don't have to feel self-conscious about their appearance.

"What I have found is that a lot of women are more comfortable working out without men," said fitness instructor and owner Rosalie Campagna-Brown. "Here, they exercise with their peers so they don't have to worry."

Growing up in Unionville, she has "...always been in-

involved in sports." While attending Markham District High School, she was actively involved in volleyball and track and field, and went on to major in Recreation, Kinesiology, and Business at the University of Waterloo. After graduating, she managed a successful fitness club there for two years.

This year, Mrs. Campagna-Brown and a friend, Jeff Maslanka, were recent finalists in the nation-wide Crystal-Light aerobics competition. She teaches the advanced aerobics class from Monday to Friday at 5:30 p.m.

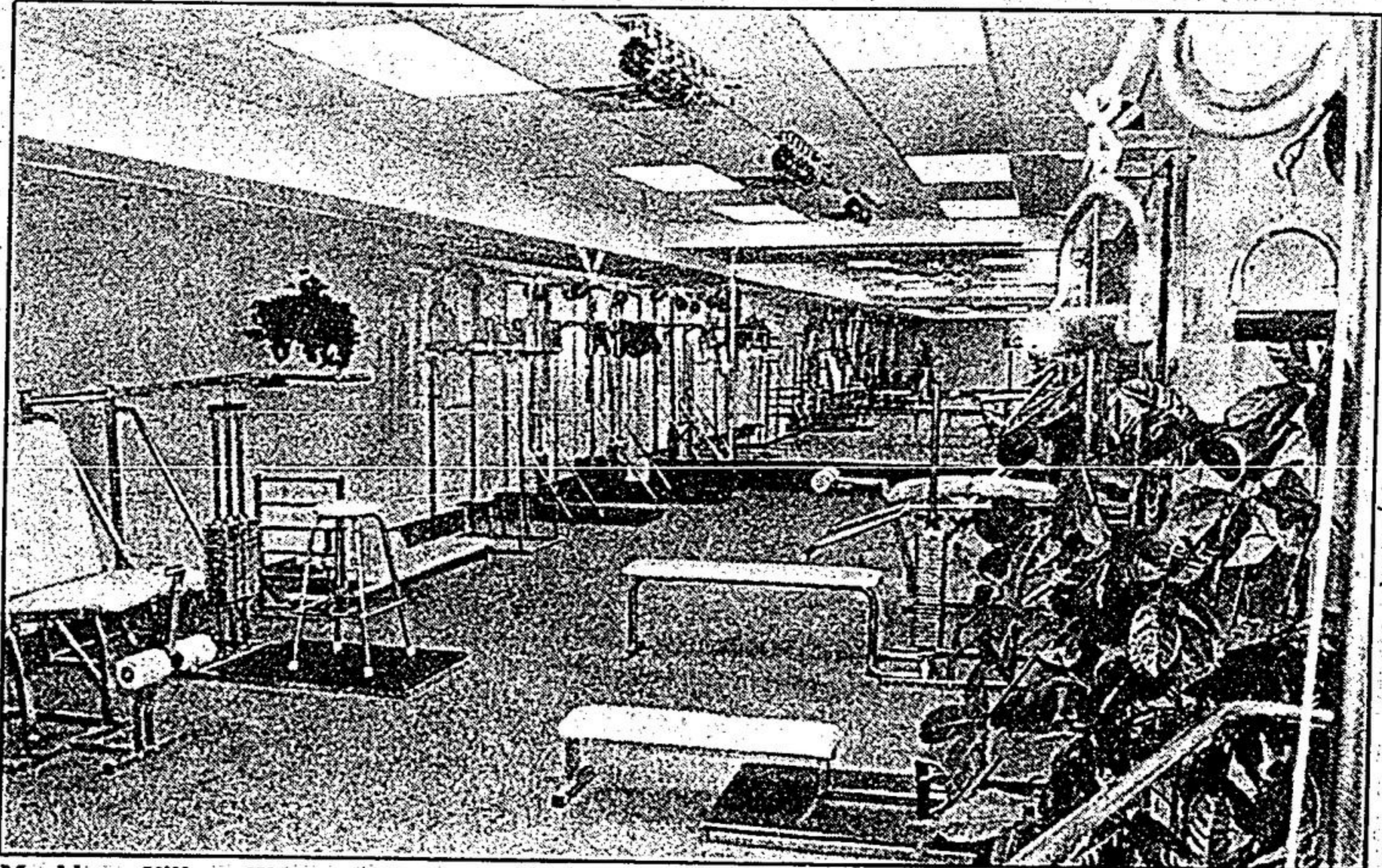
In fact, she says, the entire 16 members on her staff are qualified fitness instructors.

The fitness club is oriented toward women of all ages and walks of life, from professional women to housewives. A day care centre, open daily from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., is located on the premises for mothers who can't get away from the kids.

"As the general public becomes more educated, they become aware that fitness is not a fad, but rather, it is a lifestyle," she said, "...something they would want to keep benefiting from for their entire lives."

And you won't find any belt-machines and rollers — fads made popular in the 1950s — to shake away or roll off the pounds at this club. Instead, the instructor believes that working up a good sweat is the ticket to a healthier body.

"To lose weight, dieting by itself is not the key," she explained "...a combination of



Markham Village Women's Club offers modern equipment especially designed for use by women. The centre caters specifically to women

with a daycare centre and programs tailored to their needs.

exercise and healthy eating is."

One woman, upon losing upwards of 60 lbs., not only looked and felt better, but also underwent a "total personality change", she said. Getting into shape improved her confidence and greatly enhanced her self-esteem.

The fitness club offers four different levels of aerobics instruction on special "double sprung" floors. The elevated wooden floor, carpeted and

thickly padded, is designed to cushion the impact and stress on the joints, and muscles.

She also noted that although a lot of women are intimidated by weights, the club's weight equipment has been "...scaled down to suit women."

The bench press bars, for example, are not as wide as those normally found at fitness clubs, and are made to accommodate a women's narrower shoulders. Weights also increase in increments of 2.5

lbs. rather than the standard 10 lbs., she added.

Markham Village Women's Club also offers exercise bicycles, a glass-fronted whirlpool overlooking the gym, private showers, sauna, change rooms, and year round sun tanning facilities.

Despite greater public awareness of the importance of fitness, "...about 96 per cent of the population thinks about getting in shape, but only four per cent actually do it."



ROSALIE COMPAGNA-BROWN
Fitness lifestyle encouraged