

Time running out for Robb House

By Deb Bodine Champion
The only thing that is certain with regards to the Robb House is that time is running out.

There're only one and a half years to go until the deadline to have it moved from its present location on the northeast corner of Markham Rd. and 14th Ave. The beautiful stone house, built

in 1853, was donated two years ago to the Markham Guild of Village Crafts by Mr. Art Stollery on the condition that it be moved from its present location by June 1988.

Betty Riggsby, spokesperson for the guild, says that until a structural engineer can be recruited to do a feasibility study on moving the

dwelling, the project is at a complete standstill.

She explained that until the study is done they cannot begin to do any fundraising, but until they have enough funds they cannot afford the engineer's fees.

In a telephone interview, Mayor Bell denied knowledge of the donation of the house to the Markham Guild of Village Crafts. She

said she'd prefer that the house be moved to a heritage area of Markham. "Robb House should be used as a home and not as a museum piece", she said. "I know someone who is willing to pay the cost of moving the house, but only if they can live in it themselves".

Mayor Bell is interested in creating a neighborhood of heritage homes adjacent to the Markham Museum, relocating fine old homes instead of demolishing them.

Mrs. Riggsby feels that the Robb House belongs on the Markham Museum property, since the members of the guild do all the demonstrations of traditional crafts at museum functions. It would serve as headquarters for the craft guild.

"We are presently in temporary premises and it won't be long before the developers begin building at the house's present location. We need that study done im-

mediately", said Mrs. Riggsby.

Alita Burgess, of Heritage Markham has a totally different perspective from either Mayor Bell or Betty Riggsby. Heritage Markham recommends that the house remain at its present location. Mrs. Burgess suggests that the guild negotiate with the property developer about the land on which it is situated. She believes that the craft guild will be welcome in the high density area planned for in the future.

Mrs. Burgess explained there are two options to move the stone house and neither is practical. The first is to take the house apart stone by stone and reassemble it exactly the way it was and the second, to move the entire house, estimated to weigh at least 116 tons. The route the house would travel to get to the museum would include a steep downgrade followed by a steep upgrade, and then right through the centre of town via Main Street.



The historic Robb House has only a year-and-a-half before its June 1988 deadline runs out. The Markham Guild of Village Crafts needs money for a feasibility study to see if the house can be moved. The house was donated to the Guild by owner Art Stollery two years ago. — Roberta Di Maio

Editor's Mail

Provincial financial help needed to fund growth

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following letter was written to Ontario Premier David Peterson from the Unionville Ratepayers Association. Dear Sir:

What has happened to planning in the Town of Markham, Regional Municipality of York?

In the past few years, the members of our ratepayers association have seen increasing traffic congestion and overcrowding of schools.

The congestion on Hwy 7 at either 7:30 a.m. or 5:30 p.m. is intolerable. Unionville High School was a school that we were told for years was not needed, yet the day it opened, it was overcrowded.

It is our understanding that a school designed for 1,200 will have 2,000 students attending in September 1987, necessitating triple shifts. Did we build a school or a factory?

We talk to our local politicians. We are told schools and transportation are not their jurisdiction. We talk to our regional politicians. We are told only some roads are under their jurisdiction, but not major provincial highways.

Markham was expected to fulfill its Official Plan objectives by the year 2001. We have almost reached those projections now — 15 years early.

This province made a commitment to growth when it constructed the York-Durham Sanitary Sewer System, yet it has failed to live up to its commitment to provide the necessary complementary services to growth.

Our inquiries at the Ministry of Transportation and Communications convince us that the Markham section of Hwy 407 is so low on the priority list that it will be the turn of the century before construction even begins.

Unionville is about to receive another 1,000 new housing lots on its westerly boundary, yet there are no public or secondary schools being built to accommodate these new families, let alone the existing population.

The addition of another 2,000 cars next spring to the already intolerable traffic congestions on Hwy 7 may soon give rise to a new euphemism — "The Hwy 7 Parking Lot."

While we recognize services cannot be justified without the population in place, planning and construction is not keeping pace in one of the most rapidly growing communities in Canada.

We write to you and ask to whom we can turn for solutions today. Is the province prepared to honor its commitment to growth in this town? The Ontario Treasurer has unexpectedly found money in the provincial budget.

Cannot any of it be allocated to provide the much-needed provincial infrastructure to properly service the population growth of this town?

We do not need to hear "we understand." We need to see action. We need to see co-ordination of the multi-levelled political jurisdictions which shape our community. We need co-operation, not tension.

Can we turn to you to spearhead this much needed action for our town?

Colin Creasey,
president
Unionville Ratepayers
Association

CORRECTION

Woodside Square Shopping Centre will not be open this Sunday.

We apologize for any confusion our previous announcement may have caused.



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