

Parents learn 'streetproofing'

By KATE GILDERDALE
 "Streetproofing" was the theme for parents recently as members of Orchard Park's Home and School Association welcomed Sergeant Rodney Sine of the York Regional Police to its last general meeting.

Along with information on streetproofing, Sgt. Sine also pointed out that recent reports of teen gangs have been blown out of proportion by the press.

"When you read something, read between the lines," he cautioned.

Despite concerns about a recent incident involving vandalism at the recreation centre, he stressed "Stouffville is a very safe place to live, with a low amount of crime."

The town isn't without its problems though, Sgt. Sine noted. "If I said child abuse doesn't happen here I would be wrong. The reality is that it does go on."

He told the group "it's not you I need to talk to, it's the ones who don't care enough. They're not here tonight."

With many couples working, there are a lot of latchkey children, he says. "Kids of five and six are going home to empty houses, and that's against the law."

In one case he'd dealt with, a single mother left her six-year-old daughter alone at a mall all day while she went to work during March break.

For parents who want to find babysitting help, he suggested they choose someone who's done a babysitting course and who is at least 12 years of age.

Parents who take children to a mall should arrange to meet them in a specific place if they get separated. "Tell them you'll meet them where the food is, they all seem to know that," he said.

Parents should also teach their children who to approach for help if they're lost, he added.

"Have you ever discussed with your child what abnormal behavior is? Have you even taken a walk in your neighborhood and asked where they play?" These are some of the things parents can do to help safeguard their children, he pointed out. They should also keep a list of names, addresses and phone numbers of their children's friends.

"Can you reach your child at any time? Can they reach you?" he asked. Children should always be told to phone their parents if

they go to a friend's house from home, he said.

"Streetproofing is a way of life. It's something you have to do daily. We try to train the kids but we can't do it alone."

Organizations such as the Block Parents offer valuable help. "We're always looking for more people for that."

In answer to a question from Orchard Park principal Jan de Laat, Sgt. Sine agreed the problems of abuse and abduction weren't any worse now than in the past, but noted the area is growing fast.

"As more people come in crime will increase." Following his presentation, Sgt. Sine showed a film on streetproofing called "Better Safe Than Sorry."

Home and School treasurer Sally Sandiford announced a total of \$10,332 had been raised to date, "almost half from hot dog lunches, the rest from the wrapping paper sales."

President Angela Cumbers told parents the Association planned to spend the money on providing playground equipment for the school, which would probably be erected in stages because of the high cost.

Permission to put in the equipment had been sought from the Board of Education, and it was

hoped they would cover the cost of preparing the ground, which was estimated at close to \$8,000. Mrs. Cumbers said the school expected to hear from the Board by the end of April.

At the conclusion of the

meeting, she asked those present to consider running for positions on the executive.

Mr. de Laat praised the work of the Home and School and said the school community has benefited greatly from their input.

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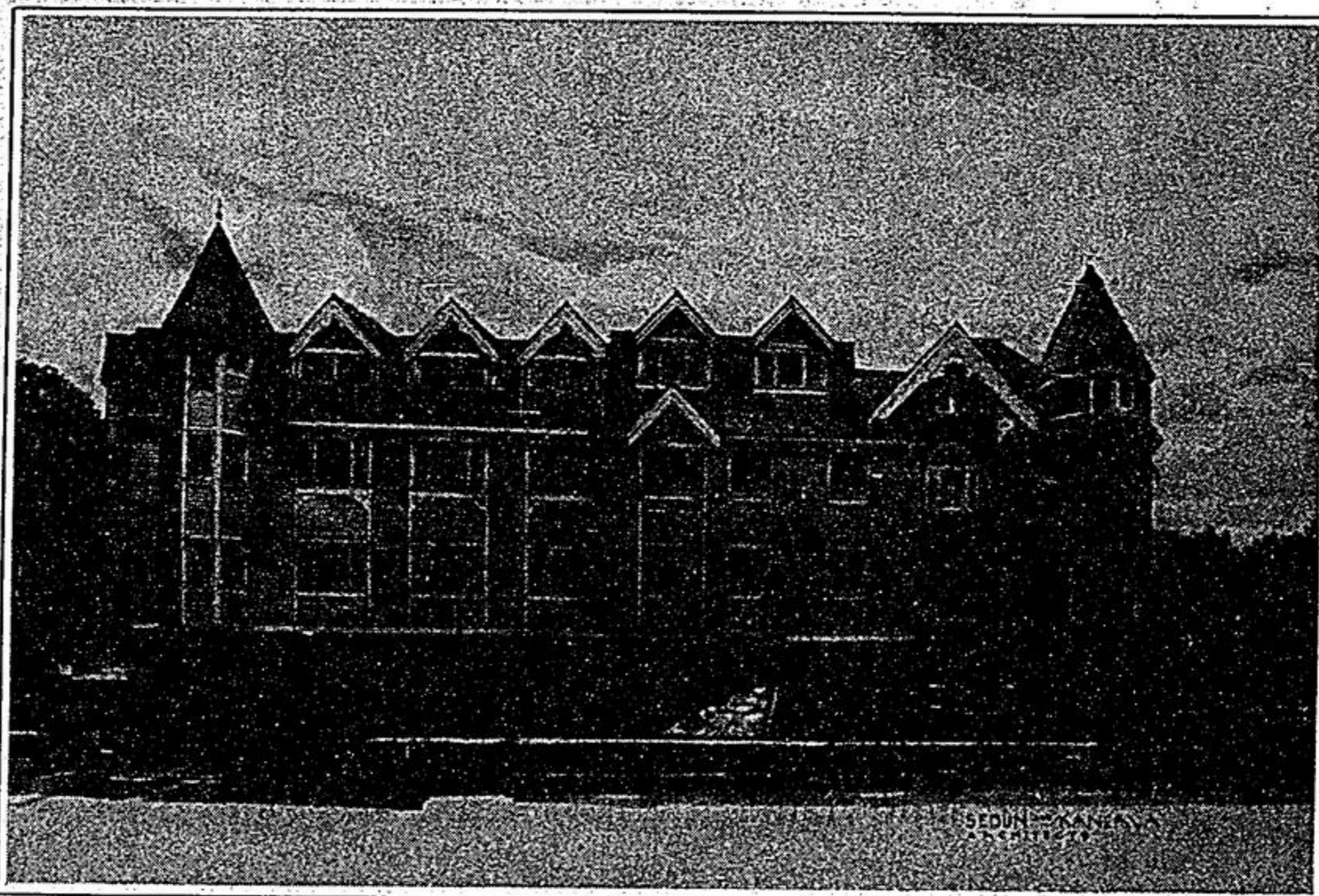
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Stouffville budget ready

STOUFFVILLE — For all intents and purposes, Whitchurch-Stouffville's 1989 budget is final. However, at the earliest, it won't be presented at open Council until May 2, Mayor Fran Sainsbury said Monday.

The Town's still awaiting a finalized figure from York Region Board of Education.

"We've cut ours down quite a bit," Mayor Sainsbury said following an all-day meeting Friday.

However, an increase of 5.6 per cent can't be maintained, she admitted. "That's fallen by the wayside," she said.

The mayor said cuts have included "everything we can truly live without."

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Yours sincerely,
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