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Province all wet over water funds

A cloud of unrest continues to hang over the Ballantrae and Musselman's Lake area following a tense meeting regarding the future of its water supply.

The Town, seemingly snookered behind the need for provincial government funding that hinges on an all-or-nothing ultimatum, has a hard sell in getting support for the plan.

But the provincial government's criteria is too restrictive as it stands. According to the mayor, all residents, whether they need it or not, may be required to hook up to the communal water system before provincial money is forwarded.

And those residents, whose wells are satisfactory, have every right to question the need for their contributions when they won't benefit from the new system.

At the same time, other residents in the area need action taken to improve their current water situations.

It's a no-win situation for the Town and area residents when the provincial government is calling the shots.

To its credit, the Town was there to hear residents, not tell them how it would be. The Ontario government should follow suit.

Expensive dream

Cardinal rules over new regional building

York Regional Council was on the right track with its decision last year to select eminent architect Douglas Cardinal as the mastermind behind its proposed headquarters in Newmarket.

And though the new regional headquarters is still just a design documented on paper, Mr. Cardinal is the only person who has the talent — and imaginative vision — to bring it to the people with all its impressive architectural statements.

When working as a reporter covering Regional Council in



at random

steve houston

early 1988, I was skeptical of Mr. Cardinal's design proposed to members of Regional Council.

The consensus among reporters who regularly covered the meetings was that the building he proposed was impressive, but unlikely to be built as illustrated.

And we all assumed his building would be far too expensive for the taxpayers of York Region to bear. Besides, we wondered, didn't he have a notorious reputation for designing structures whose final price tags were far removed from the bottom line jotted down on paper?

My concerns vanished last week while on a short visit to Ottawa where the Museum of Civilization — Mr. Cardinal's *piece de resistance* — beckoned on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River, with all its gracious curves.

The museum, designed so uniquely apart from every building I have ever entered, is fascinating. And there's nary a corner to be found anywhere within.

Keeping that in mind, I called York Region Information Officer John Scott.

Indeed, he said, Mr. Cardinal's design impressed the heck out of regional politicians. And the architect's reputation preceded him. His proposal was chosen over approximately 60 others.

But, as Mr. Scott profoundly pointed out, when you buy Cardinal, you buy a package. It is an expensive proposal —

which now stands at some \$43.3 million — but Regional Council had the foresight to cap its spending limit on the new centre.

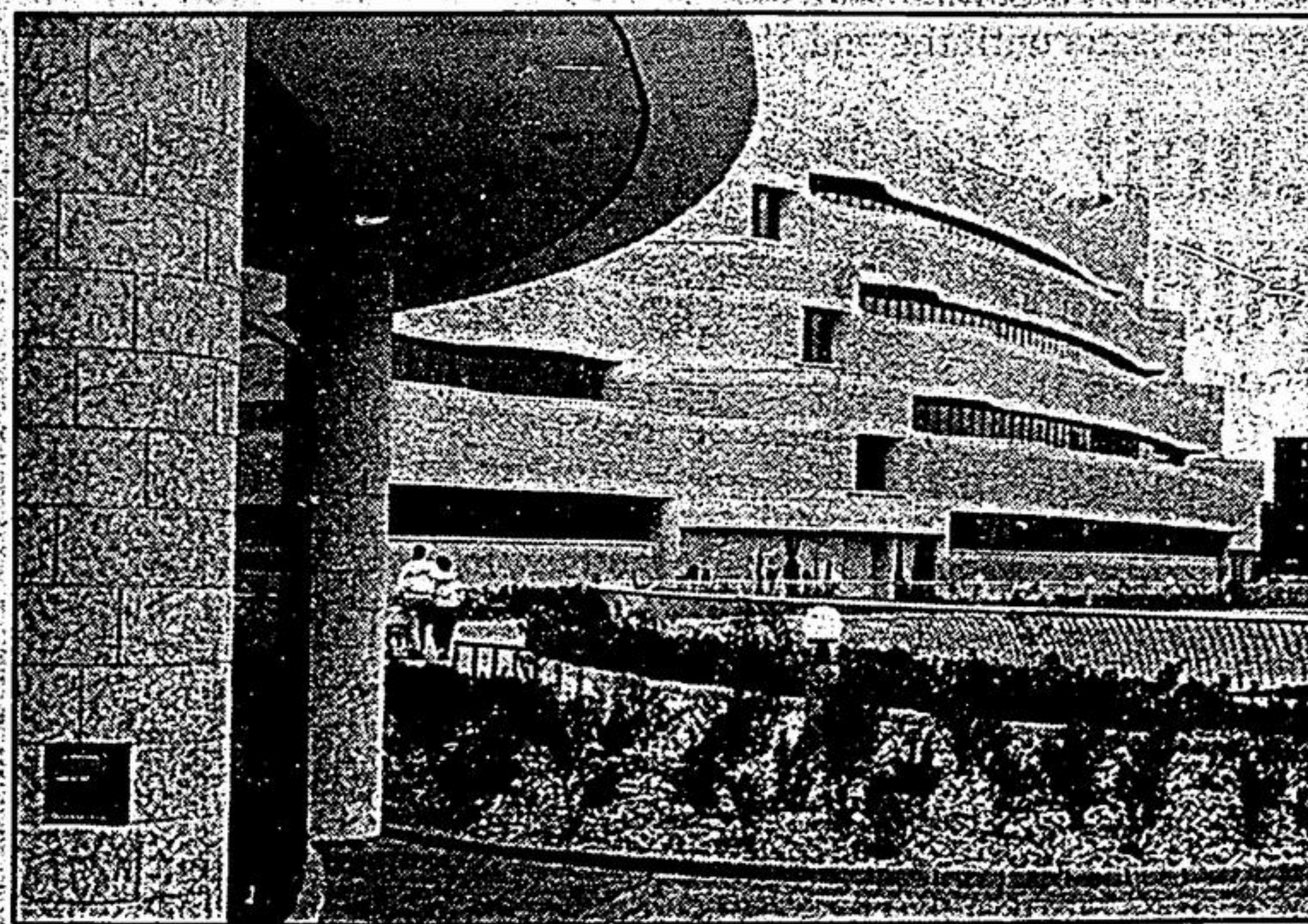
And when completed, it will be a welcome (and long-term) relief for regional government officials who now work out of cramped quarters in Newmarket.

Excessive? Maybe, but an argument could be made for York Region's exponential growth in the 1980s which has resulted in the perceived need for such a structure.

I fell for Mr. Cardinal's genius in four short hours at the Museum of Civilization, and I'm somewhat of a cynic. Given my discovery, I'm willing to accept his vision for York Region, though it's difficult to see past the \$43 million.

It will truly be the first time in York's history there will be a focal point for the seat of regional government. But will the rest of York Region accept it?

I guess the proof will be in the proverbial pudding.



Photo/STEVE HOUSTON

The majestic Museum of Civilization, designed by architect Douglas Cardinal, is a fascinating structure that combines aesthetic qualities with practicality. Visiting this building in Hull, Quebec quickly set aside any concerns about Mr. Cardinal's design of the new York Regional headquarters in Newmarket. It will be an expensive building, but one that York Region residents will boast about.

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