

Schools expanding for all-day kindergarten

Harry Bowes Public School will provide full-day kindergarten starting in 2014.

In order to accommodate the all-day programming, Whitchurch-Stouffville council approved a single-storey, 3,191-square-foot addition to the rear of the Greenwood Road building.

The addition will actually house two new day care rooms, while the current day care rooms will be converted into the kindergarten rooms.

Ontario elementary schools started phasing in full day learning for four and five-year-olds in September 2010 with Glad Park, Summitview and Whitchurch Highlands among the schools to offer it in the first year. Ballantrae started offering the program last fall.

Wendat Village opened in 2012 and offered the program right away.

Along with Harry Bowes, which opened in 2008, Oscar Peterson will also offer full day kindergarten starting September 2014, according to the Ministry of Education's

website.

In the Catholic board, St. Mark began offering the program in September 2011, followed by St. Brigid and St. Brendan in 2012.

Construction on two new classrooms for St. Brigid's full-day kindergarten program is currently underway. The school, which opened in 2001, is adding a single-storey 3,358-square-foot addition onto the rear of its building.

As part of the project, the existing hard surface play area will be displaced, according to the council approved plan from March of this year. A 155-square-metre fenced-in play area adjacent to the kindergarten addition will also be built. This is the school's first expansion.

Construction is expected to be completed in time for the start of school this September.

Preliminary work at the nearby Harry Bowes' expansion will start in April. A year from now, construction will begin and be completed in time for the new school year, according to Licinio Miguero, spokesperson for the York Region board.

- Sandra Bolan

GERANIUM APPROVED FOR 2ND BALLANTRAE ESTATE SUBDIVISION

\$1M homes big with buyers

BY SANDRA BOLAN
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Tired of living on a postage stamp-sized lot but don't want to leave Whitchurch-Stouffville?

More estate homes are being built on Ballantrae's Lakeshore Road, just east of Hwy. 48.

For \$1 to 1.4 million, you can get a bungalow or multi-storey dwelling that ranges in size from 3,000 to just under 5,000 square feet on about half an acre of land.

You will be tapped into town water but have your own septic tank.

"The demand for this type of housing is strong," said Cheryl Shindruk, executive vice-president of land development for Geranium Homes.

Geranium is just finishing up construction of roughly 50 other estate homes on the west side of Hwy. 48. Three other estate developments, including Camelot, have also been completed within the past few years, according to Councillor Phil Bannon.

'ONE OF NICEST AREAS IN PROVINCE'

"You're in the middle of nowhere but close to everywhere," he said, noting Ballantrae is precisely 12 minutes to Stouffville, Aurora, Uxbridge and Mount Albert and 40 minutes from downtown Toronto.

"This is one of the nicest areas in the province to live," he said.

Seventeen homes will be constructed on 5342, 5376 and 5410 Lakeshore Rd., which will be merged into one larger property.

There are two homes on the land. One will be torn down, while the other, according to Ms Shindruk, had the development designed around it.

"It's a gorgeous home right now," she said, noting it, too, will be available for sale.

MORE THAN ESTATE HOMES

When the plan was first proposed, area residents expressed concern about increased density and the septic system's impact on the high water table. But at last week's council meeting, the proposed plan was approved by councillors without a peep from the public gallery, according to Mr. Bannon.

A condition of many subdivision agreements is the provision of parkland. This parcel of land is too small. However, Geranium executives have decided to re-establish the Musselman Lake stewardship plan, which is an environmental project to improve the lake's water.

"It's great for the lake, all the residents around the lake," Mr. Bannon said.

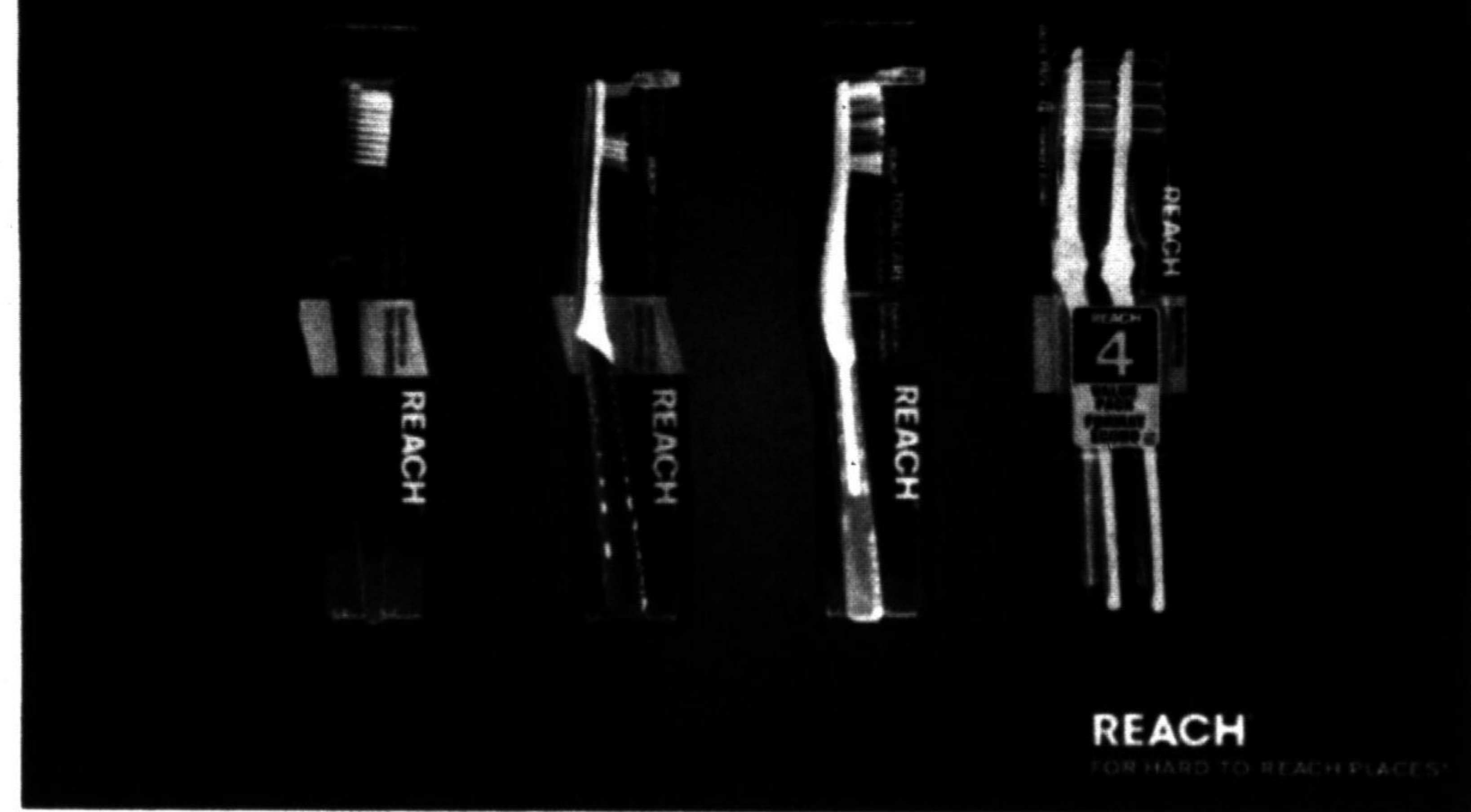
Providing there are no major complications with the approval process, the first homeowners are expected to move in early 2015, according to Ms Shindruk.

Ballantrae is not comprised of all estate homes. Properties in the Ballantrae Golf and Country Club subdivision are between 1,400 and 2,000 square feet, according to Mr. Bannon, who lives on the course. And there are more modest homes in the older areas of the community, as well as in Musselman's Lake.

The municipality's median single detached home value is \$575,000.

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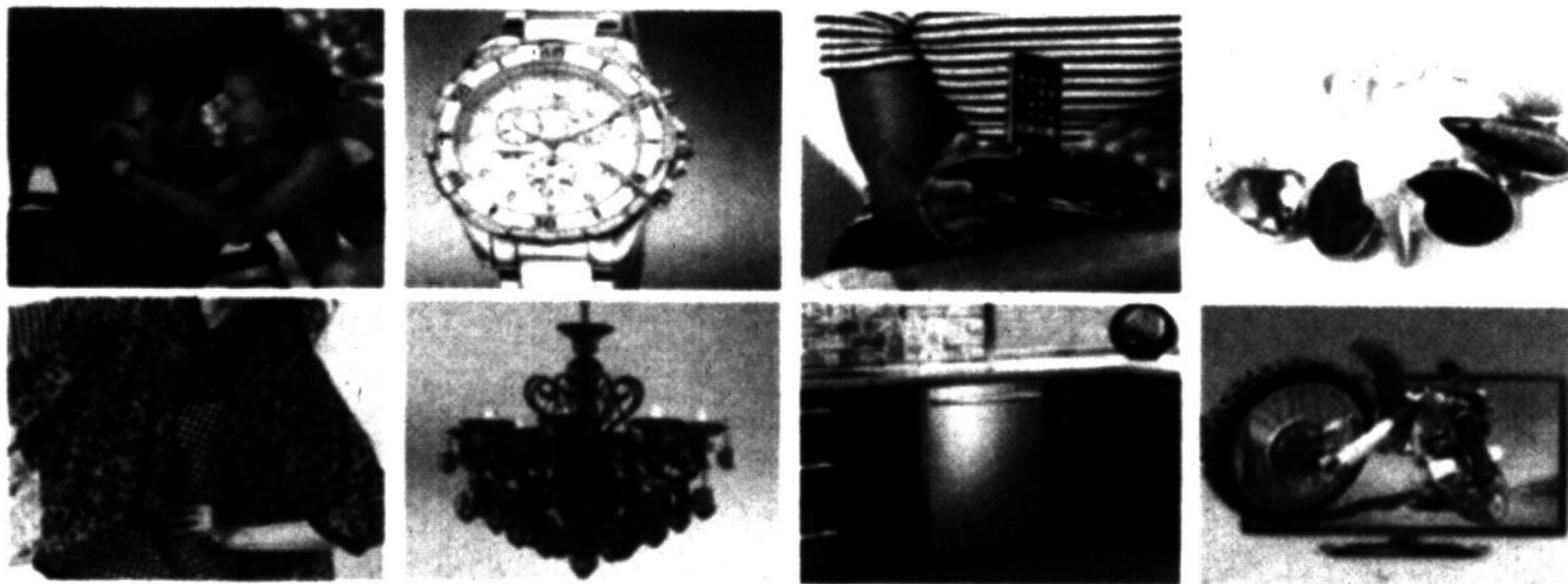
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