Pioneer descendent upset by homes

BY THANA DHARMARAJAH
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

Edward Mitchell is saddened by the nearly 450 "cookie-cutter" homes being constructed in the northwest of the city on land that, until recently, had been owned by his pioneer family since the 1830s.

"You're wiping out evidence of the people that have lived there for the last 175 years," said Mitchell, referring to the land west of Elmira Road, near Willow Road.

Mitchell sold the land to Armel Corporation in 2000, but said he didn't anticipate what would happen.

Melissa Castellan, the city's senior development planner, said since 2002 Armel has registered a mix of single homes, semi-detached homes and townhouses in the city's northwest.

The lots were then sold by Armel to various builders such as Reid's Heritage Homes, Fusion Homes and Hira Custom Homes.

Castellan said the development has been happening in phases, with another set to take place next year.

There are still 215 single homes, 32 semi-detached homes and 82 townhouses that are still undeveloped, she said.

An apartment building at Elmira Road and Tovell Drive is to be built as well. Forty hectares of wetlands also sit just north of the development, which Castellan said is a protected area.

In 2005, the City of Guelph approved the demolition permit for the Mitchell farmhouse, which sat on a 30-acre parcel of land at Paisley and Elmira roads, south of the subdivisions currently under construction.

The historic property was then demolished after much controversy to make way for a shopping plaza.

Castellan said Armel has yet to reveal further plans for that specific site.

City councillor and former heritage chair Leanne Piper said that property could take at least 15 years to develop.

That was the initial concern from Guelphites, who wondered why Armel was in such a hurry to tear down the farmhouse, she said.

Mitchell said he's disappointed that the architecture of the homes now being built don't reflect Guelph's rural traditions.

"The idea is that it should be made distinctive and interesting," he said.

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Bats in home nothing to fear

BY THANA DHARMARAJAH
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GUELPH

If a bat has found its way into your home, there's really nothing to fear, says a Guelph Lake Nature Centre interpreter.

"They want to get out of your house as much as you want them out," said senior resource interpreter Greg Meredith.

Historically, bats are associated with vampires and humans are often suspicious of animals out at night, he said.

This time of year, young bats are out and about flying before they hibernate for the winter.

At night, when it gets cool, that's when a young bat who has left his nest accidentally may likely seek shelter in someone's home, Meredith said.

"It's like a kid lost in the park trying to find its way back home," he said.

The most common bats people may encounter are little brown bats, which weigh about 10 grams, he said.

If a homeowner does encounter a bat, it's best to leave it alone and open some windows or doors so it has an easy route out, Meredith said.

People can also put on leather gloves, throw a towel around it, pick it up and release it outside, he said.

Meredith said just because there are one or two bats in the home, doesn't necessarily mean there's a colony of bats.

Often if there's a colony, people can smell it from the droppings or hear the bats squeaking and flying around at night, he said.

Rick Rosatte, senior research scientist with the Ministry of Natural Resource's wildlife research section, said if there's one bat in your home, there's a likelihood there may be more. Some people may choose to coexist with the bats, he said, but if it's a public health threat and there's bat feces everywhere, it's best to humanely remove them.

It's best to remove the bats when the young are capable of flying such as in the late summer, he said.

The Centre for Disease Control recommends seeking medical attention if a person wakes up and sees a bat flying around their room since they may have been bitten.

There are about 40 or 50 confirmed cases of rabies transmitted through bats in Ontario each year, Rosatte said.

However, a bat with rabies is unlikely to be flying around your home as it generally seeks peace and quiet, Meredith said.

Although the risk is low, it's better to be safe, said Bill Dowd, president of Humane Wildlife Control Inc.

The company has technicians across southern Ontario and Quebec called upon to remove bats from homes.

According to the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act, people can only kill, harass or capture wildlife if it's damaging property.

However, the animal control agencies generally called in to get rid of bats aren't allowed to kill them unless they get another designation, said Gary Martin, the Fish and Wildlife Legislative Specialist with the Ministry of Natural Resources.

The agency will come in and do a general inspection to figure out the entry and exit points as well as bat-proof the home so they can't get back in through cracks or crevices, Dowd said.

It's best to rid the homes of the bats since the feces can cause a respiratory illness, he said.

Sealing up the home can cost about $1,000 and cleaning up the droppings can cost about $2,000, Dowd said.

He said people can only detect a bat colony through smell if there are about 500 bats, but if the colony has only about 20 bats, they may not be able to tell at all.

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KYLE RODRIGUEZ, SPECIALTY TO THE MERCURY

Framed by a row of development homes, a cow grazes on the egg and cattle farm on Grange Road. Two new proposed subdivisions for the area have residents concerned about increased traffic, tree loss and a lack of services in the area.

Cows on moo-ve

Proposed subdivisions on Grange Road concern area residents

BY LAURA THOMPSON
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

City planning staff will introduce two proposals next week for adjacent subdivisions on Grange Road, which have raised concern among area residents and prompted several letters to the city.

The applications, filed in April and June by independent developers, propose two parcels of land, east of Hadati Creek on Grange Road, be developed into new subdivisions.

The city's official plan already designates the lands for residential use.

The proposed subdivisions, which encompass nearly five hectares, would include 165 new residential units in the form of townhouses, duplexes and single-detached homes.

Lunor Group Inc. and Fabbian Homes Inc., which submitted the subdivision plans for three Grange Rd. properties, have also asked the city to reduce the minimum lot area to 215 square metres from 230.

Gateway Homes Inc. has proposed developing 300 Grange Rd. into a separate subdivision.

The property is currently an egg and cattle farm, one of the few remaining within the city limits.

The proposals will come before a city council planning meeting next Tuesday, during which applicants and residents will have a chance to comment.

Rena Akerman, who lives nearby, said residents are concerned the development could result in increased traffic and tree loss. She also said there's a lack of services in the area to meet the needs of another subdivision.

"There's no room in (the proposed development) for any kind of park or playground. So where are children going to play?" Akerman said yesterday. "The city's building houses, not neighbourhoods."

Chris DeVriendt, a senior development planner for the city, said a recommendation won't be made to council until staff have reviewed the application in detail, taking into consideration the residents' concerns.

In a letter to the city, the Guelph Development Association supported the proposed subdivision, stating the plans are consistent with the province's growth plan.

The developers proposing the subdivisions have already held meetings with the city to discuss how the construction of the subdivisions could be co-ordinated.

"Obviously there's a lot of issues to consider here," DeVriendt said. "We don't look at one site in isolation of the other . . ."

Armando Carere, who owns the farm at 300 Grange Rd., said he plans to relocate the farm to Jones Baseline once development proceeds.

"I'm not giving up farming. The postal code is still the same," he said. "It would have been developed a long time ago had only one person owned (the lands)."

Richard Chambers, a nine-year tenant on Carere's farm, said he'll miss the space and privacy the property has afforded him.

"It's the march of progress, (but) it's been a thoroughly enjoyable experience," he said. "It's sort of nice to wake up and hear cows as opposed to the other things one hears in the city."

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Johnson scholarship winners revealed

GUELPH

World-renowned operatic singer Edward Johnson spent most of his life in Italy, New York and Chicago, but he grew up in Guelph, where he returned to retire in 1950.

Four local musicians have been applauded for following in his footsteps, receiving $500 scholarships from the music foundation set up in his name.

Lesley Emma Bouza is beginning a postgraduate diploma in voice and performance at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in Wales.

Dominic Gregorio, a University of Guelph grad, is working on his doctoral degree in choral music and choral conducting at the University of Southern California.

Cellist Charlotte Moore is studying music at Wilfrid Laurier University, and fellow cellist Adam Riggs will begin a master's degree at University of Hartford this fall.

Only students raised in Guelph and Wellington County who went to local high schools are eligible to apply for the Edward Johnson Music Foundation Scholarships, which are made possible by the Guelph chapter of the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Guelph-Wellington Men's Club and the Rotary Club of Guelph.

• Mercury staff

GUELPH MERCURY FILE PHOTO

Guelph-born opera singer Edward Johnson poses in this 1920 portrait. Four local musicians have been awarded scholarships from the music foundation set up in his name.

Salvation Army looks for hamper helper

BY NICOLE BAUTE
MERCURY STAFF

GUELPH

The Salvation Army is looking for someone to step in and help get 200 chickens and 800 turkeys for their Christmas food hampers this year.

Jack Upsdell and his staff at Upsdell's Food Market on Woolwich Street have done the job for 38 years, acting as a liaison between the supplier and the Salvation Army.

They would put in the orders, request the delivery dates and make sure the poultry got where it needed to go.

Jack Upsdell, seen in this 2003 photo, is retiring at the end of the month, which means the Salvation Army must find a new poultry provider for its Christmas hampers.

But Upsdell is selling his food store and butchering business and retiring at the end of August, which leaves the Salvation Army without their Christmas hamper right-hand man.

"He was a huge asset," said Beverleigh Broughton, Salvation Army community and family services director. "It'll be a big change for us this year."

Broughton said they need to find someone to help them with this year's hampers as soon possible as they usually place their orders in October.

Going directly through a supplier would be an option, Broughton said, but it depends on whether they can find a supplier "willing and able" to donate the time and manpower to help them out each Christmas.

Upsdell has also been helping Lakeside Church arrange orders for about 100 Christmas hampers.

Christmas has always been a busy season for Upsdell, who said he actually delayed his retirement — he was planning on retiring last year — because he found himself wrapped up in Christmas orders.

"All of a sudden I woke up one day and said, 'Whoa, (it's) too close to Christmas. I gotta stay.' "

Upsdell's is closing at the end of the month. Beverleigh Broughton can be reached at 519-836-9360.

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LOCALBRIEFS

GUELPH

Police say man 'jumped into side of car'

A 21-year-old Guelph man remains in hospital after being struck by a car Sunday morning at the corner of Kortright Road and Ironwood Road in the city.

A 42-year-old Cambridge woman was driving a 2003 Chrysler east on Kortright when the man, walking west on the south side of Kortright, jumped into the side of her car according to a police press release.

He was thrown to the ground, resulting in serious head and neck injuries.

"The investigators haven't been able to interview him yet," said Guelph Police traffic supervisor Sergeant Derek McNeilly. "He has been transferred out of the intensive care unit to a regular ward."

Witnesses are asked to contact the traffic unit at 519-824-1212, ext. 7280.

GUELPH

Impaired driving charges for Guelph man after crash

David Nemes, 40, of Guelph is facing an impaired driving charge following a head-on crash Friday evening that sent two Guelph residents to hospital.

Craig W. Pitman, 30, was airlifted to Hamilton General Hospital after sustaining serious injuries in a collision on Jones Baseline, about one kilometre south of Highway 7. Pitman is listed in critical condition. Erin Foley, 25 — a passenger in Pitman's vehicle — received non-life threatening injuries and is in Guelph General Hospital.

FERGUS

OPP search for witnesses to Fergus car collision

Wellington OPP are seeking witnesses to a serious collision that happened over two weeks ago. David Graham Currell, 21, of Oakville faces a number of charges, including impaired driving causing bodily harm, related to an Aug. 11 head-on collision on Highway 6 north of Fergus.

The crash sent April Dawn Reay, 25 — who was eight-months pregnant — to hospital. Reay is listed in stable condition and the male child is in serious condition at McMaster University Hospital in Hamilton.

Police believe Currell's 1997 Dodge pickup truck, travelling south, strayed into the northbound lane, crossed the centre line and struck Reay's Jeep head-on at about 11:20 p.m. near Sideroad 5 in Nichol Township.

Currell is accused of fleeing the scene on foot. He was later arrested.

Police are asking anyone with information to call Constable Greg Henderson with Wellington OPP at 519-843-4240, or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-8477.

• Mercury Staff