



1990: New school planned for Hespeler

Jim Quantrell, At a Glance

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Cambridge archivist Jim Quantrell takes our readers back for a glance at events which occurred 10, 15 and 20 years ago.

20 YEARS AGO: Third week of May 1990

Even though city council unanimously rejected a proposal from the city's architectural heritage advisory committee to designate the former Galt Curling Club building on Queen's Square as a heritage building, council was asking the Cambridge Library Board to study ways in which the old landmark could be incorporated into library expansion plans. The library board wanted to tear down the outmoded structure to accommodate an enlarged library building and while board members agreed to discuss the concept of incorporating the building, it was clear that they were convinced that the heritage structure was not suitable for use as a library.

The Waterloo Region Separate School Board was given the go-ahead to build a new elementary school in Hespeler but there was a catch. The money would not be available until 1993. Under the funding formula in place for new schools, the local board was responsible for raising 40 per cent of the total costs while the province provided the other 60 per cent. Since the provincial portion was not to be available for three years the board had the choice of waiting or borrowing the \$3-million the province had promised until that money arrived and paying the interest charges that amounted to \$300,000 per year. The board decided to wait. The new Woodland Park area school was expected to cost \$5-million and would accommodate approximately 500 students. It was needed to alleviate overcrowding at Our Lady of Fatima School. At the time, Our Lady of Fatima was using nine portable classrooms.

15 YEARS AGO - Third week of May 1995

In a 6-1 vote, council's planning committee passed a recommendation that would allow the construction of an 110-unit condominium complex on land behind St. Luke's Place even though the development would overshadow the homes of residents on Edward Street and Valley Drive. Residents of those streets presented a united front in opposing the condominiums declaring that the seven-storey structure looming over them would drastically affect the quality of life in the neighbourhood. In the end, the committee decided that the project contained more positive elements than negative and that the condominium tower was the best use for the land. The neighbours might object and fear a change for the worse for their neighbourhood but council decided that the project was "good for the entire city" and should go ahead.

It looked like the severe overcrowding at St. Margaret of Scotland Catholic Elementary School would be alleviated as early as 1997 after the building sites and management committees of the Waterloo Region Separate School Board decided to bump up the construction date of a new elementary school slated for Clemens Mills. The provincial government had earlier announced that the board would receive \$4-million to assist in the construction of a new school in the area in 1998-1999. The decision to build a year early meant that the board would have to borrow funds that would cost them, and their taxpayers, an additional \$400,000. The new school would accommodate 461 students. St. Margaret of Scotland had been built to accommodate about 400 students but had an enrolment of approximately 700.

10 YEARS AGO - Third week of May 2000

The president of Conestoga College proclaimed that Cambridge could be the main campus for the college "20 years down the road" but if that was to happen, the community would have to start "seriously planning for it now". The president noted that the campus could start with 4,000 students and grow from there. For the second year in a row, the college had been ranked the best in the province and prospective students were taking notice. In the coming year, the college would have 5,000 full time students, 2,100 apprentice positions, 33,000 continuing education students and 9,000 trainees in training and development programs. The previous year had seen a six per cent increase in applications and the number was expected to increase the next year by eight per cent.

Cambridge Memorial Hospital was to receive \$3.6-million in provincial funds to put toward the cost of its future expansion. The funding was to help the hospital meet the cost of implementing new and expanded services that were ordered by the Health Services Restructuring Commission. Those services included a new 23-bed in-patient mental health unit as well as an increase in acute care beds, a new 28-bed acute rehabilitation unit, an 18-bed sub-acute care program, additional beds in the complex continuing care program and a seventh operating room. The new and expanded services were not expected until 2003. In the meantime the money was to be invested.

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