

Students luck out on housing

By TOBY SANGER

METRO ARE STUDENTS ARE unlikely to see any further accommodation of their housing needs in the provincial housing program for this year.

Assistant vice-president John Graham says "all the student housing projects are going to be looked at critically" because "right now, it's a buyer's market."

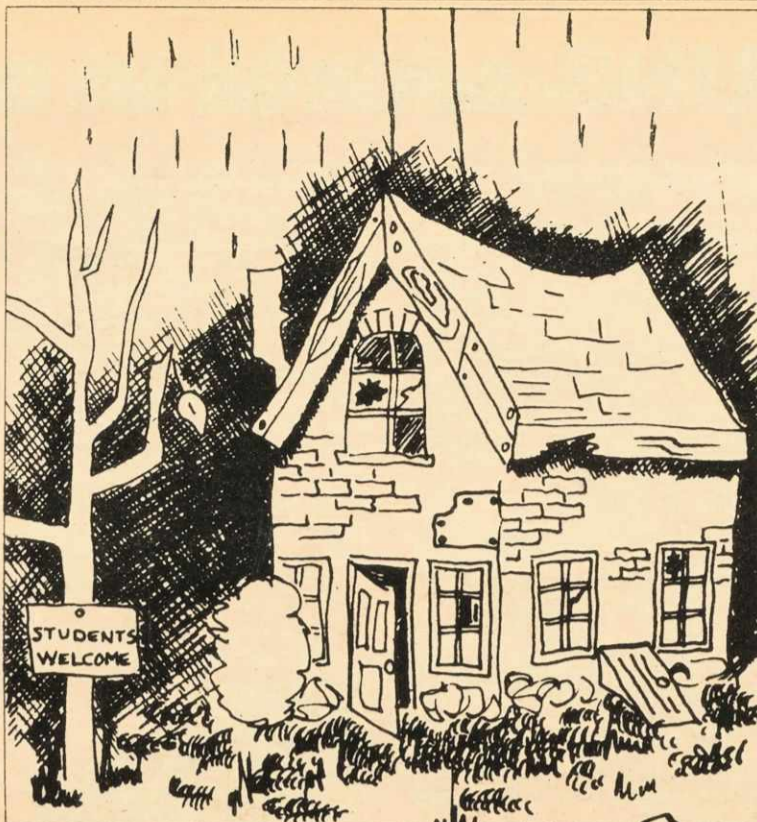
Dalhousie is starting construction on an 84-unit women's residence on South Street which will serve as replacement housing for 80 units that have been sold by Dalhousie to the private market.

Graham says because the housing situation has improved so much, it is likely that all universities will be revising their housing plans.

Sheila Fougere, the director of the off-campus housing office at Dalhousie, says all the adverse publicity about the housing situation last year sparked entrepreneurs to build extra rooms and encouraged people with extra rooms in their houses to let them.

This year, Fougere says, many of those people still haven't got calls after their notices have been up on the housing office's walls for weeks.

"Last year we had people (searching for apartments) who were close to tears from frustrations . . . this year, I have only had one person loudly complain," says Fougere.



She says rents haven't changed much over last year but availability has increased for all different-sized units.

The most recent data on vacancy rates in the Halifax area come from the April survey done by Canada Mortgage and Housing.

According to these data, the vacancy rate for the Halifax Peninsula South area has increased to 0.6% from the 0.1% rate registered in October 1985. The vacancy rate for the whole metro area increased to 2.0% for April 1986 from 0.6% in October 1985.

Wilson Fitt, a market analyst from CMHC, says the vacancy rate has increased mainly due to demand changes. People have

been moving out of the region for economic reasons, reducing the demand for rental apartments.

In addition, says Fitt, the drop in interest rates led to an increase in the number of people who decided to buy a home for the first time, moving out of the rental market.

New construction of houses in the metro area has increased only marginally over last year. Fitt expects it to drop below last year's levels by the end of the year.

However, Fitt says, the improvements in the housing market will likely only benefit renters in the higher price range of the market.

"Apart from the new social housing construction underway, all the new construction is mostly high-priced."

Nurses given Band-aid

THE THREE YEAR CONTROVERSY over classroom space for the school of nursing has been given a band-aid solution but the director of the school still isn't satisfied.

Dean of Health professions, Dr. R.S. Tonks, arranged for nursing classes to be held at the Izaak Killam Walton Hospital auditorium and in rooms in the Grace Hospital.

Official approval for use of the space still has not been given because authorities at the hospitals have been away.

Dr. Phyllis Stern, director of the school of nursing, says "For a

short term solution, it isn't bad, but there are some days when we can't use the auditorium." "Other times when we've used the hospitals, we've been forced out."

Tonks admits it is not a long-term panacea for the problem. "We've got a temporary solution; we still have to find a permanent solution," he says.

Assistant vice-president John Graham doesn't know whether the university will have to pay for the use of the hospital rooms. "I don't think the hospitals are anxious to charge a fee. We don't know yet and we aren't going to ask them."

Extended Withdrawals

DALHOUSIE VICE-PRESIDENT academic and research Alister Sinclair has agreed to a two week grace period for students to withdraw from "R" courses in arts and sciences after the recently established Oct. 6 deadline.

Student union president Jamie MacMullin says the two week grace period is still unsatisfactory "The date is in the middle of mid-terms. Students probably

won't have course evaluations done by that time. The Oct. 20 date isn't adequate but it is better than the Oct. 6 date."

"We will push to have the date looked at again next year," says MacMullin.

The administration did not consult with students about moving the deadline ahead from last year's deadline of January 22 and did nothing to advertise the change.

Barney Savage, community affairs co-ordinator for the student union, admits last year's council was aware of the proposed move but did nothing about it.

"It was announced at a meeting but it didn't seem like a big thing us," says Savage.

The administration "didn't consult us, it didn't go to Senate . . . it was just the three deans getting together."

Tardy students to be charged more

STUDENTS TARDY IN PAYING their tuition fees will soon discover extra fees pegged on to what are among the highest tuition fees in Canada.

A \$50 "reinstatement fee" was introduced last fall for students who were financially dismissed due to late payment of tuition.

Mike Wright, director of financial services, says the fee is a close estimate of what it costs to reinstate students and is charged on a cost recovery basis. "The aim is

not to slap a penalty on the student."

Student union president Jamie MacMullin disagrees.

"I find it hard to believe that it costs \$50 to reinstate a student . . . all it takes is pulling out a file and writing 'paid' on it."

MacMullin questions whether the university is even justified in financially dismissing students. "Either you're in or you're out . . . what does 'financially dismissed' mean?"

Universities in Quebec have recently introduced an extra stu-

dent levy for 'materials' instead of increasing tuition fees.

MacMullin wonders whether the same practice is being implemented here. "I hope the university is not intentionally charging students these incidental fees on top of their tuition fees."

Charging students extra fees such as this not only affects students' budgets, says MacMullin, it also colours their view of their alma mater.

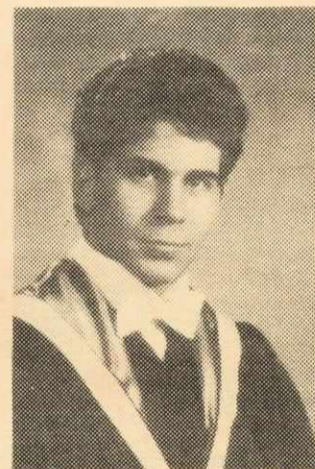
"Should students think of Dalhousie in good terms or as the institute which tried to get the most money out of them?"

Graduation Portraits

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