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OIL

by Walter Plaut

Dalhousie has been steadily expanding its facilities and campus into a neighbourhood of two- and three-storey houses. According to the latest available list, Dal now owns 66 houses, including eleven duplexes.

These houses are valued at \$2 1/2 million. About twenty of them are being used as university offices, in a city which already had a critical shortage of family-type accommodations.

Of course Dal has already demolished many other houses to make way for its buildings. The worst intrusion a neighbourhood has suffered is the heating plant, which is not only ugly, but noisy and dirty. Spanning from Seymour to Henry Street, it is a source of permanent annoyance to residents.

Now another Dal facility is ready to begin a multi-million dollar Physical Education Complex emphasizing participatory recreation rather than spectator sports. Only a provincial government moratorium on university building construction is stopping the university from going ahead. Pressure on the government is strong as Dal has received a

\$500,000 grant (from an unidentified company) providing the university can get the go-ahead and come up with remaining funds by December 31 — about \$5 million.

Unfortunately one of the proposed sites includes houses east of the old Dal Rink, though this may just be an excuse for demolishing the houses now for future expansion.

Most of the houses on the west side of LeMarchant Street (between South Street and University Avenue) have been bought up by the university, but a few private owners refuse to sell, and Dal cannot expropriate.

The immediate focus, however, is on five houses on the north side of South Street (between the Dal Rink and LeMarchant Street). Dal owns four of them; fortunately one house, occupied by one man for many years, is owned by him and his relatives, who refuse to sell.

Even so, Dal has given the tenants of the other four houses notice to vacate by September 30. Three of these houses are being rented out to youth services agencies: Earth Household, Camelot and Halifax South Open School. The other Dal house, at 6169 South Street, has been vacated by the tenants, and stands empty and unused.

*Earth Household, 6165 South Street, is a referral centre and temporary residence for young people in need of counselling. The house is operated 24 hours a day.

*Camelot, 6171 South Street, is a residence for



A house owned by Dalhousie at 1460 Oxford Street, not unlike those on South Street.

ministration and the anonymous Phys Ed donor feel that their monopoly on education and other services is being threatened, and wish to retain their power and income by destroying the very houses the youth projects occupy.

Yet Dalhousie already owns plenty of open land on which to build new Physical Education facilities. There is, for instance, a huge parking lot between the Dunn Building and the main library. A shuttle-bus service would eliminate the need for so much parking space, or alternatively, the long-talked about parkade could be made a reality.

Dal should cancel demolition plans and donate the houses rent-free. The youth projects are now being charged up to \$250 a month rent.

Dal's use of houses for offices must also be halted to alleviate some of Halifax's housing shortage. The university's attitude as expressed by its Business Manager is; "that isn't Dal's problem."

If enough protest is heard, the eviction of Earth Household, Camelot and the Open School will be halted and the houses themselves will be saved from demolition. One of them doesn't belong to the university anyway.

What happens depends on you. Dalhousie's present priority of money must be displaced by a consideration for people. By writing a letter to Dr. Henry D. Hicks, Dal President and a Liberal Senator, or calling his office at 424-2511, your influence will be felt.

Dalhorizons, Dalhousie's expansion program, finds the houses pictured on this page (similar to those on South Street) "unacceptable". Is this just an excuse for demolition?

young men attending New Options, a free school. Father John Bosco is the houseparent.

*Halifax South Open School, 6177 South Street, is an alternative educational centre designed to replace or supplement the public schools. Attendance is voluntary, free of charge and ungraded.

Due to the eviction notices, as well as some funding problems, these services are in crisis. All three projects have been asked to vacate by September 30 and it is feared that the university will demolish the houses immediately.

Late word is that at least one of the projects will be allowed to stay put for another month — till Election Day. The Federal election date was determined by Trudeau, who at an earlier date appointed Dal President Hicks to the Senate.

Hicks has not resigned from his university post, however. Furthermore, the Federal Liberals also have some control over the financial future of both Earth Household and the Open School, which are funded through

the Local Initiatives Program.

As of this writing, none of the three projects have found alternative facilities. It is the worst time of year to find accommodation.

The youth services find their present houses adequate. Moving at this time would be a hardship for both residents and staff members, even if suitable places for relocation were found.

Whether done by universities, governments, or other profit-seeking organizations, the common practice of demolishing perfectly sound houses must be stopped. In this case, the groups occupying the houses have provided crucially needed services since their inception. The people they help have problems which conventionally-structured private and governmental agencies aren't equipped to handle in a humanistic way.

Perhaps the Liberal government, the university ad-

These houses unacceptable — Dalhorizons



This is at 1690 University Avenue.