

Developer Will Clear Site In Fall

WASAGA BEACH — The council chamber here was filled to capacity July 23 as plans for a major development were revealed for a parcel of land between Beachfront Drive and Mosley Street (see the July 24 *Enterprise-Bulletin*).

Ted Rae, president of Triland International, said he plans to clear the land this fall. He anticipates receiving the necessary approvals for the 61-unit motel-shopping mall complex during the winter, with construction beginning next spring.

Mr. Rae said he planned to open for business in the spring of 1987.

The details of the plan for the area currently

occupied by the Kawartha Motel, an amusement park and several stores, were explained by Jim Bednar, vice-president of Leisure and Recreation Concepts, Inc., also based in Texas.

Mr. Bednar said studies have indicated a need for more accommodation in Wasaga Beach. His main consideration was how big and for how long, he said.

Although the company has yet to finish its studies (scheduled for completion by the end of the month), results indicate a 61-unit facility could operate on a viable basis for 12 months a year, he said.

The motel units would be on the second-floor of a two-storey building, to be

erected on Beachfront Drive, with parking, playground and swimming facilities to the south, fronting Mosley Street, said Mr. Bednar.

The mall units would be on the ground floor, and would be leased, he said.

Anticipated services would include a pretzel shop and beer hall, hamburger-hot dog sales, a candy store, fish and chips, beachwear, an oyster bar and a record shop, said Mr. Bednar.

Mr. Rae, Mr. Bednar, and Michael Jenkins, also of Leisure and Recreational Concepts, each stressed the displayed plan is an "option" and can be changed.

"It is by no means the final draft," said Mr. Rae.

Mr. Bednar said the property on the south side of Mosley Street, (the old marina) will be used for parking, while the land currently occupied by the Hole in the Wall, and the campground behind is scheduled for a recreation vehicle park.

Mr. Rae and Mr. Jenkins answered several questions from committee of the whole council and planning advisory committee members.

Mr. Rae said he plans to "scrape" the site this fall, whatever happens in the meantime.

If the approvals are not forthcoming he will make it a parking lot, "because I believe it would make more money," he said.

After the presentation, Mayor Walter Borthwick said he feels the proposed development would add "stability" to the area.

"Those who weren't sure what was going to happen now know where they sit," he said.

Zoning administrator David Hulme said the amusement park area will need a zoning change but the other property is designated in conformity with the proposal.

Wasaga Beach comes of age

By Peter Goddard
Toronto Star

WASAGA BEACH — As Tom Wayne looks out from his balcony over a serene Nottawasaga Bay — a promise that all will be well for tonight's gala opening of his new nightspot on the beach, The Dardanella — the bikers drive up.

Bikers have been to Wasaga Beach what swallows are to Capistrano, returning each May as if the direction here is genetically encoded with each crude tattoo. Wayne frowns with worry; he's just sunk \$300,000 worth of renovations into a \$550,000 building — one old enough to have had its boards tread by World War II's kid soldiers on leave from nearby Camp Borden. He's got new neon, new glasses for his bar, new paint. He doesn't want new trouble.

Designer jeans

But then he looks closer and relaxes. *These bikers aren't the bikers of old.* These bikers are in fact, two young couples with designer jeans and designer leather jackets. They're not leaping off their greasy Harley choppers, spewing broken teeth and brandishing blood-smearred chains. They're on an outing. They lean up against their Hondas and one woman sips at a bottle of un-

The carny atmosphere that once surrounded this summer hot spot is being replaced with trendy trappings designed to snag yuppies' holiday dollars

sweetened apple juice.

These are the people Wayne and partner Rick Seip want for their massive club with its restaurants and bars. The Dardanella, which they bought last year, is a new kind of club for Wasaga beach: Upscale and urban. It has Jr. Walker And The All-Stars, a downtown favorite there tonight. The Glenn Miller band arrives July 9 with reggae's Messenjah appearing July 31.

Then again, the "Dard's" opening has to be seen as part of a broader picture. Wasaga Beach, once witness to massive liquor violations during any holiday weekend and massive violations against good taste year-round, has come of age. It's nicer. It costs more. It's going up-scale.

"What's happening is that the kids who were up here, having a good time maybe 10, 15 years ago, have come back," says Mayor Walter Borthwick. "But they've changed. They've got their own kids. They've got some money. They're yuppie types I guess you could say. They are peo-

ple who don't want a \$100-a-week cottage with no facilities. They're used to something better and they're willing to pay for it."

In Florida terms, Wasaga Beach has gone from being a Fort Lauderdale bust-out during college spring break to a weekend in the vicinity of Palm Beach. Borthwick saw things start to change when \$40,000 cottages were torn down making way for new cottages "costing three or four times that much." And as more and more developers ease in and out of town unobtrusively, he sees "tens of millions of dollars of development in the area."

Cheap thrills

Wasaga once pitched itself to tourists as the "longest freshwater beach in the world." That was the official line. Its unofficial selling point was a heck more appealing. It offered more kitsch, tackiness and wonderfully cheap thrills per square acre of sand than any place this side of Niagara Falls.

It still does to some degree.

Across from The Dardanella, you can still get pictures that glow in the dark, play a game of miniature golf and for "your choice, \$18.98," you can purchase a great green frog on a pedestal or a life-size fire hydrant.

Wayne, in club and restaurant management business, helped usher in Yorkville's upscale era and now operates The Palm restaurant on Queen St. E. He realizes that the Dard's ritziness has its limits. "We're going to have food here but we're not saying that this is the after-theatre grill at Winston's. Our crowd will want good, affordable food."

Nostalgia for the old Wasaga comes easily — a lot easier than surviving the old Wasaga was, for I can still remember some of the grisly fights I saw 20 years ago and the night the biker tried to punch out a Buick.

But some of its sweet little motels remain, with neat trim and signs outside saying, "Hollywood Pines Cottages, Housekeeping Accommodation. Daily. Weekly." And on sweltering hot

summer days you can still visit the remaining little family cottages facing the bay, where a light filter of sand always grates underneath your feet and you can see nightfall through cracks in the boards.

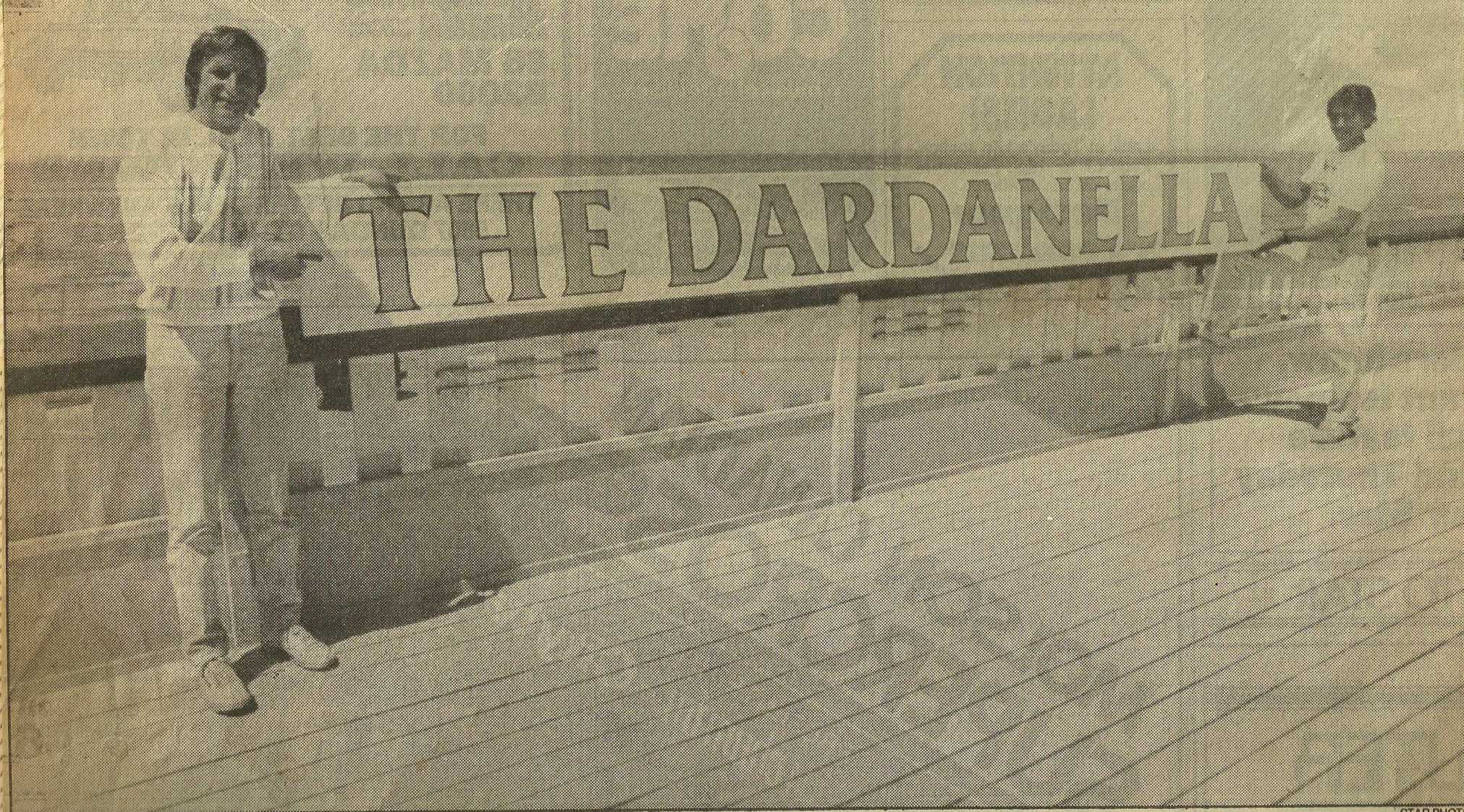
In one sense, the very new Wasaga, with the video stores next to the hot dog joints and its new condominium units, recalls a Wasaga before the old Dardanella hit its stride in the '40s, when the hotel restaurant bragged of its white linen table cloths and the word "bingo" had yet to be heard.

Brown-bagger

During the war The Dardanella "was a brown-bagger," says Wayne. "The place didn't have a licence so the soldiers would hide their liquor." It was the night in 1948 that feuding motorcycle gangs lit into each other at Oavie's Club and smashed part of the amusement area that gave the beach the reputation it's only now beginning to shake.

"But study after study has been done," says Wayne, as we leave the bikers to head back to his office, "and they all say the same thing.

"With the Americans coming here instead of heading to Europe, you won't know this place soon."



At the beach: Tom Wayne, left, and partner Rick Seip, swing open the doors tonight on their massive Wasaga Beach club. Bookings, designed to at-

tract all kinds of upscale audiences, include Jr. Walker and The All-Stars tonight, and the Glenn Miller Band and reggae favorites Messenjah later

this summer. Soldiers on leave from nearby Camp Borden during World War II often used to dance away the night at "The Dard".

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