

Hampstead holds back flood waters with Water-Gate

BY MARTIN C. BARRY

At one time, at a much higher level of government, the word Watergate was synonymous with political intrigue and the downfall of an American president. But in the town of Hampstead these days, Water-Gate has an altogether different significance.

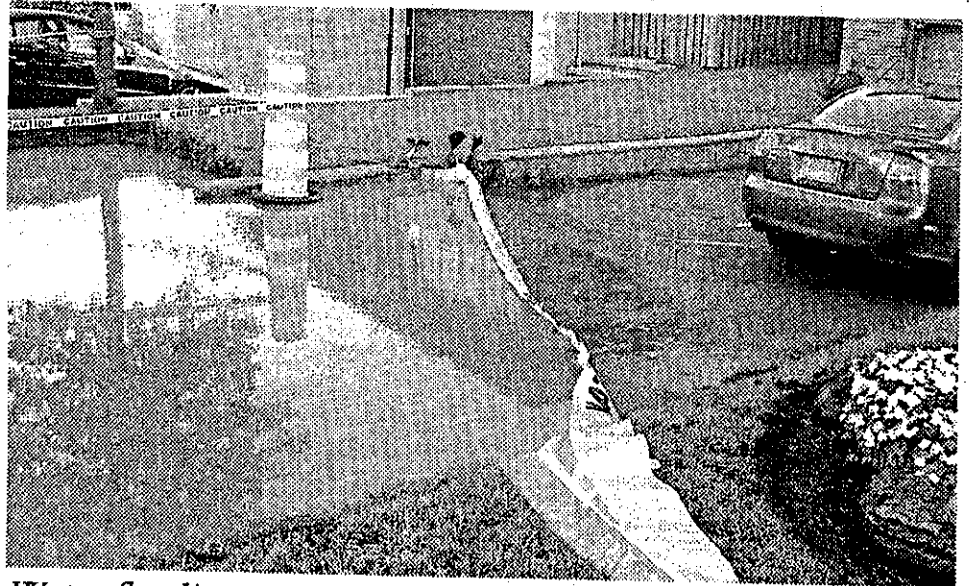
Water-Gate is the brand name of a portable, self-inflating water barrier system that Hampstead officials believe can help them resolve a flooding problem that has tended to occur on certain streets during torrential downpours.

Early on a recent Sunday morning during one of the heavy rain storms that has assailed Montreal over the past summer, water was beginning to flood down the driveway of a Harland Rd. home where it would undoubtedly have

done much damage to the basement.

Responding to the crisis, Hampstead Public Security department personnel, who are mandated to deal with such emergencies, deployed the portable Water-Gate equipment which they transport in the rear of one of their vehicles, and had the situation under control almost immediately.

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Water flooding on Harland Ave. in Hampstead.

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According to Mayor Bill Steinberg, Hampstead is so far the only municipality on Montreal Island to have adopted the system. Once unrolled and inflated in an area where flooding is taking place, it diverts the water back out onto the street where it can drain into the sewer system.

In the most recent flooding incident, the Water-Gate unit was apparently able to prevent about three feet of water from accumulating in the submerged driveway of the home on Harland Rd.

"Thanks to some very fast work

and this Water-Gate system, very minimal water got into the basement and the damage was averted," said the mayor.

While he would not divulge the system's cost to Hampstead, Steinberg said it was a fraction of the amount the town was paying for insurance. "We have a \$100,000 deductible for water main break claims, and there are a lot of downward sloping driveways in Hampstead and a lot of expensive stuff in people's basements," he said. "We were getting some very large claims, but as dramatically illustrated, the Water-Gate system really works."