

New Green Developments in the Burgh

by Jane Heintzman

New Edinburgh News (www.newedinburgh.ca)

October 2009

...279 Crichton Street

Another Green project is just getting underway at 279 Crichton where Vert Design owner Chris Straka is about to embark on the construction of the first officially LEED certified home in the neighbourhood, and among the first in the City to be certified at the LEED Platinum level (the highest level of accreditation). LEED, the acronym for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, is a Green Building Rating System initially developed about a decade ago by the U.S. Green Building Council. It entails a set of internationally accepted benchmarks for environmentally sustainable design and construction, and has been adapted to the Canadian context by the Canada Green Building Council (CaGBC). Among the eight basic LEED criteria applied in the rating of new construction are sustainable site selection, water efficiency, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. Interested readers can get more details on the rating system at www.canadagreenhomeguide.ca.

Chris' new development at 279 Crichton will employ more than 90 green design initiatives, each of which will be evaluated by an independent green builder in the course of the rating process. He hopes to hold periodic Open Houses on the site to give interested members of the community a chance to see first hand the use of green materials, systems and approaches, and to understand why they are used. As passers by may have noticed, the initial deconstruction process at 279 Crichton has taken a bit more time than a conventional demolition/landfill operation, as Chris is committed to reusing the materials in the old building to the greatest extent possible. For example, the original red brick from the first floor of the building (the quantities of which were insufficient for Chris' purposes in the new building) has been carefully removed and sold to a mason specializing in heritage of restoration.

In all of these new green developments in our community, the overriding aim is to achieve what is perhaps best summed up in the Canada Green Building Council's to description of the environmentally sustainable prototype: "Uses less energy, water and natural resources; creates less waste; and is healthier and more comfortable for the occupants"