

For Immediate Release

## Unique LEED Neighbourhood Development Project Revitalizes Brownfield Site in Cambridge

Cambridge, Ontario July 8, 2008...Challenged to come up with innovative ways to find solutions for brownfield properties, the City of Cambridge and Reid's Heritage Homes have created an excellent example of a project that is elevating redevelopment to new heights. The project is one of a few in the province that has been selected to pilot a new prestigious Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Developments (LEED-ND).

Until recently, LEED was primarily focused on green building practices. The LEED-ND designation, administered through the US Green Building Council, Congress for the New Urbanism, and Natural Resources Defense Council, offers national standards that integrate green building and smart growth standards into neighbourhood designs. The Preston Meadows project is one of five selected in Ontario to participate in the LEED-ND pilot program.

Preston Meadows, located at 633 Margaret Street, was originally the home of Preston Coach and Car, once the main supplier of streetcars and rail cars for all of Canada. The company operated on the site from 1907 until 1924. The majority of operations at the location were as a foundry for Kanmet Casting until 1991. Later, the site was occupied by the Church of the Universe and the main building was destroyed by fire. The City of Cambridge stepped in and bought the property and began clean up and demolition of the fire damaged building and removal of more than 6,000 litres of a petroleum-based cleaning chemical.

"It was an opportunity to guide the development and revitalization of the project to ensure the most appropriate fit for the community," says Carol Kinzie, Property Officer for the City of Cambridge. In 2005, the City of Cambridge accepted an offer from Reid's Heritage Group after a request for proposal brought in four interested parties in the purchase and development of the former industrial site. The City recouped its investment and successfully facilitated the refurbishing process.

Reid's 10-acre site proposal for Preston Meadows was submitted only days ago to the City's Planning Services Department. The site plan includes 82 townhouse units and two separate 4 storey mid-rise buildings containing 111 units. It also builds in plans

for approximately 2 acres for a landscaped berm/pedestrian trail connection, open space and storm water management area. The unique neighbourhood design features used for the Preston Meadows project encourages walkable communities and construction measures that reduce environmental impacts. More than 90 per cent of the landscape for the project will incorporate native species.

Reid's is currently finishing up the soil remediation of the foundry sand. The clean up has resulted in moving over 120,000 cubic metres of earth, or the equivalent of about 3 times the entire area of the site or the equivalent of 22,000 truck loads of earth. Over 5,000 tonnes of material has also been taken away to a licenced waste management facility. More than 11,000 tonnes of concrete has been crushed on-site and recycled for structural purposes. Systematic excavation and testing will continue until full remediation is complete.

Rather than employing a development approach whereby a "Certificate of Property Use" would be registered on title disclosing some restrictions or warnings around the site use, Reid's has committed to restore the site such that no warning would be required. "While the remaining foundry sand is currently at acceptable levels for industrial or parkland use," says Brian Blackmere, Director of Development Planning and Land Acquisition for Reid's Heritage Group. "We will restore the site to comply with an unrestricted residential standard."

In speaking to the scope and guiding principals of the project, Blackmere says the compact residential community embodies some of the character of the surrounding mature residential area and sets a high standard for infill and redevelopment of a brownfield site. "The comprehensive public process and the innovation and leadership demonstrated by the City of Cambridge and the Region of Waterloo for this initiative was vital," he adds. "We look forward to working with the city on next steps." The plan is to have the physical services for the site in by the fall of 2008. In the meantime, Reid's is actively looking for a prime location to put in a sales office to begin marketing the unique residential opportunity offered by the Preston Meadows project.

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### **More About Preston Meadows**

A unique addition to the vision for Preston Meadows is its inclusion as a LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design for Neighbourhood Developments) pilot project sanctioned and selected by the United States Green Build Council. This program extends the LEED initiative beyond the bricks and mortar of the building to encompass the community design having specific regard for the following elements: compact development; special consideration for brownfield development; smart locations; bicycle and pedestrian connections; reduced automobile dependence; steep slope protection; supply a diversity of housing; access to

surrounding area; access to public spaces and active spaces; reduced water use; contamination reduction; and enhanced stormwater management.

The Preston Meadows site is highly supportive of the main three goals of the LEED-ND program: responsible site selection that minimizes negative environmental impact and sprawl; neighbourhood design that encourages compact walkable communities and construction measures that reduce environmental impacts associated with the construction and operation of buildings and infrastructure.

In order to help guide the overall vision, Reid's Heritage Homes has had a set of "Urban Design Guidelines" produced that detail elements to be incorporated into the plan including architectural considerations, signage and landscape design recommendations. These guidelines will be reviewed by City of Cambridge staff as part of the site plan application and will ultimately form part of the formal approvals to be granted prior to any construction on the site.

Reid's has applied to the Region of Waterloo to receive a grant to cover a portion of the cost of producing the Phase II Environmental Site Assessment required for the site. Their application has just been approved by Regional Staff as recently as July 4.

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The City of Cambridge is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. It is strategically located astride highway 401 in Southwestern Ontario, part of Canada's Technology Triangle. In 2007, the population reached over 125,000 people. With a multicultural mix and a strong foundation of support services, Cambridge has a diverse economic base with leading industries in manufacturing, automotive, high technology, pharmaceutical, business and financial services and hospitality/retail. The Corporation of the City of Cambridge is an employer with a work environment that offers the opportunity to provide service to the community through creativity and innovation, and with opportunities for career growth and advancement.

For more information on the area or the corporation visit [www.cambridge.ca](http://www.cambridge.ca)

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