

2007 11 21

Evergreen Brick Works



Moving our world from this . . .



to this.

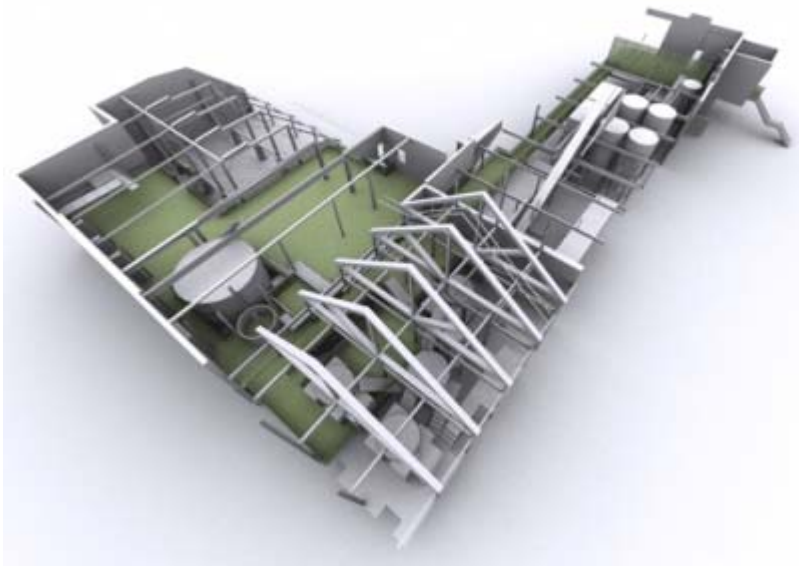
For more than a generation now one of Toronto's most compelling public spaces has remained hidden in full view of the thousands of commuters who travel along the Don Valley. The Brick Works, figurative birthplace to much of old Toronto's red-orange patina, sat waiting for a purpose worthy of its potential. Then along came Geoff Cape and **Evergreen** ("Imagine your city with nature") and everything changed. Infused with a green vision for the city, Evergreen imagined the rusting buildings and gouged earth on the site as an ideal test bed to research urban-based environmental change. Claude Cormier, one of the landscape architects involved with the project confirmed that idea at the launch yesterday, saying there is a tension at this site between being almost downtown yet being immersed in nature.

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The Brick Works produced bricks for the city from 1889 to 1984 from a 40 acre site along the Don River with a bounty of clay deposits. The fired legacy of those natural deposits can be seen most notably at the old Massey Hall and at Casa Loma's Stables--landmarks of Toronto's early exuberance as a young colony. It is ironic that today those same 40 acres may well be the home to another rebuilding of the city. In the 21st Century activities on the site will not rip up the earth and burn energy to construct the city, they will save energy to help maintain and protect it. What happens here in the next few years may well reveal how we can live well--extremely well in fact--and yet conserve the fragile natural world that is our home.



Included are images created for yesterday's launch. Evergreen is involved in a campaign to raise \$55 million to achieve its mission. To date \$37 million has been raised. In typical Canadian fashion, as imaginative as this project is it does not go nearly far enough (that's not the fault of the good people at Evergreen). Evergreen's project provides Toronto, Ontario, and Canada with an opportunity to become a world leader in the sustainable city movement. If we as a society are to achieve that end, important projects like this one need more funding from government and from the private sector. We need to give this project a scale comparable to building an Avro Arrow or levelling millions of acres of land for a James Bay hydro electric scheme. Until we make that kind of investment projects like Evergreen's will be seen as fringe activities rather than the truly world-changing activities they need to be.

[\[email this story\]](#) Posted by R Ouellette on 11/21