

## **Heritage Conservation And Sustainable Development Winnipeg Heritage Building Going “Green”**

Building for sustainability is more than just a nice concept at the Centre for Indigenous Environmental Resources (CIER). The Aboriginal environmental organization has begun creating Canada’s “greenest” heritage building in the former Salvation Army Citadel in Winnipeg. Once the \$5-million redevelopment project is completed, it will house new CIER offices, a Centre for Community Dialogue and commercial office space for lease.

The former Salvation Army Citadel, a four-storey heritage building at 221 Rupert Street and an adjacent building at 216 Pacific Avenue in downtown Winnipeg, were donated to CIER in 2002. The group is now working to redevelop the site into a 1,850-square-metre masterpiece of sustainability. The buildings will be redesigned using the Integrated Design Process to meet LEED™ (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Green Building Rating System criteria, said Rodney McDonald, CIER’s sustainability strategist. When finished, the buildings will generate their own electricity from solar energy, minimize water usage and recycle all wastewater on site.

“Buildings have an enormous impact because they use so many resources and so much energy, and once a building is no longer considered useful, or when it undergoes renovation, we cram our landfills with discarded materials,” said Mr. McDonald, who promised the entire rehabilitation project will minimize impact on the environment.

“Plans for 221 Rupert, however, call for the strategic reuse of existing materials, alternative energy sources such as solar power, and solutions to reduce water use and manage wastewater on-site,” he said. “Using a heritage building for this project also provides us with the opportunity to demonstrate the link between the conservation of built heritage (i.e. historic buildings) and the conservation of natural heritage (i.e. the natural environment), and to participate in the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg,” he explained.

CIER is a Winnipeg-based, national non-profit organization founded 10 years ago by a group of First Nations chiefs from across Canada. Its purpose is to provide technical expertise to help communities find sustainable solutions

for the environmental challenges they face. Mr. McDonald noted that this project provides a demonstration facility for sustainable approaches and technologies to First Nations, the City of Winnipeg, and the rest of Canada.

“Through this project, we plan to turn an aging eyesore into a world-class model for sustainable solutions that will work in settings throughout the country,” said Mr. McDonald. “The transformation of 221 Rupert will strengthen Aboriginal capacity and add to Winnipeg’s reputation for unique and vibrant solutions to community issues.”

Funding for the first phase has been provided by Environment Canada’s EcoAction Community Funding Program (\$100,000); Manitoba Conservation’s Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention Fund (\$20,000); Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Tourism’s Designated Heritage Building Grant program (\$10,000); and CentreVenture’s Capital Grant Initiative (\$28,000). In addition, Waste Management of Canada has made an in-kind contribution.

Currently, CIER’s offices are in the two-storey, red brick Kay Building, which was originally constructed in 1893 to house a large printing company. Its Romanesque Revival style, common to Winnipeg’s historic Exchange District, was designated a heritage building in 1989. CIER staff’s “relentless” search for appropriate natural and recycled materials to create their “green” office space has paid off, as it was given Manitoba’s Conservation Award for exceptional achievement in resource conservation.

According to its Web site, CIER defines sustainability as “undertaking environmental, economic and social activities in a manner that ensures local and global ecosystem structures and functions are able to maintain themselves in perpetuity.” It also gives some examples of sustainability in practice, such as mimicking nature to design buildings, and to design and manufacture products; designing cities to be

compact, making them better for the land, less costly to maintain and easier to get around by walking or public transit; constructing highly efficient green buildings, which are less environmentally damaging, less costly in the long run and healthier for the occupants; and using local materials to build homes, to support the local economy and reduce the environmental impacts associated with the transportation of materials.

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([www.cier.ca/index2.html](http://www.cier.ca/index2.html) and [www.cier.ca/building/index.html](http://www.cier.ca/building/index.html)).

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Heritage Canada Foundation's 2005 annual conference "Heritage Conservation and Sustainable Development" will be taking place in Regina, Saskatchewan, September 15 to 17, 2005. For more information contact HCF at [heritagecanada@heritagecanada.org](mailto:heritagecanada@heritagecanada.org) or visit our Web site [www.heritagecanada.org](http://www.heritagecanada.org)