



Homes-Extra DURHAM REGION



GREEN LIVING

Above left: A newly built green home will exhibit the best in green practices. Above right: An older style bungalow is moved to Durham College's campus to be located (and studied) side by side with the new energy-efficient green home.

Below right: The older home is transported through Oshawa to its new site.



Taking green to the limit

Durham Custom Homes partners with Durham College to create residential labs and test green homes

LISA FATTORI

Special to QMI Agency

Durham Custom Homes has teamed with Durham College to give students the ultimate classroom in which to learn green building practices.

Two homes, located side by side at the college's Whitby campus, will soon become living labs for students to gain hands-on experience about energy conservation in residential construction. The labs include an older, 1940s bungalow that has been moved to the campus and a brand new Durham Custom Homes GreenHouse that will be constructed this spring.

"As a builder, we are committed to the green agenda and so entered into this venture with the college," says Jeff Goldman, principal of Durham Custom Homes. "Students will be able to modernize the energy efficiency of the older home and, with the GreenHouse, they will learn about current efficiencies in a new build."

Students of the college's construction and energy audit programs will have access to the two homes as part of their curriculum. Energy audit students will be able

to identify the energy inefficiencies of the older home and make recommendations about how to improve its performance. This provides students with valuable practical training and helps prepare them, upon graduation, to perform energy audits for homeowners.

By contrast, the newly built GreenHouse will show how to incorporate green building practices, from the ground up. The home's interior and exterior will be only partially finished so that students will be able to see behind the walls and compare the efficiencies of various materials and systems. Insulation, open plumbing, a tankless water heating system, a high efficiency furnace and a few solar panels is a sampling of the house's elements that will be visible.

"These residential labs will help train individuals in energy efficient systems, in order to fulfill an ever growing need for their expertise in the residential and commercial building marketplace," says David Chambers, associate vp of the office of development at Durham College's Whitby campus. "Helpful throughout this process has been Durham Custom Homes, TranquilityHome Comfort, the faculty of Durham College and our president,

Don Lovisa."

Durham Custom Homes' GreenHouse is a home that exceeds EnergyStar for New Homes standards and reduces energy costs by up to 40%. The company also built Canada's first Accessible GreenHouse. This option provides people with physical disabilities with improved access in the home, so that they enjoy greater mobility, comfort and independence. Wide parking areas and pathways, lift devices and open-concept kitchens with work areas that have wheel under access are some of the features that accommodate greater access, both inside and outside of the home.

"The new GreenHouse is our Brentford model, which is a 1,600 sq. ft. three-bedroom bungalow," Goldman says. "Durham Custom Homes is a leader in accessible housing, so this house will have accessible features as well."

Durham Custom Homes purchased the older home, which was scheduled for demolition, and had it transported from central Oshawa to Durham College's Whitby campus.

This spring, a foundation will be dug for the home and construction will begin on the GreenHouse. Both residential labs will be up

and running in time for the fall 2011 semester.

Durham Custom Homes is supervising the construction of the labs and has several suppliers and trades donating to the project. Donated materials include lumber, floor joists, bricks and venting. The estimated cost of both residential labs is approximately \$500,000.

The residential labs project at Durham College builds on Durham Custom Homes' commitment to fur-

thering the interests of the home-building industry. In 2006, the company founded the Nathan and Marvin Goldman/Durham Homes Student Fund at the University of Ontario Institute of Technology in Oshawa.

Each year, the \$10,000 grant is awarded to an undergraduate engineering student, who is focusing on energy conservation in residential construction, and is in need of financial assistance.

