

# ARTICLE

## Brownfield to environmental jewel

By Diane Tierney  
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TORONTO STAR

The Waterscape on the Grand River condo project in Cambridge has gone from brownfield site to green environmental jewel.

The land was contaminated with coal tar but Haastown Holdings has spent the last three years cleaning it up. Construction has started on the first of two buildings that are on track to meet Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) specifications.

"Waterscape satisfies many people's objectives from intensification initiatives, brownfield revitalization and supporting the provincial Smart Growth program, to being a condo that's located in one of the most attractive settings in the region," says Haastown president Paul de Haas. "This charming area has many historic buildings and the Grand River that runs through the town provides a wonderful backdrop to Waterscape."

Each building will have about 115 suites. Units range from about 600 square feet to 1,400 square feet and from about \$179,900 to \$489,900. More than 70 percent of the units in the first building have sold and occupancy is slated for fall 2009.

"Many purchasers bought more than one unit, joined them together and customized them," de Haas says. "So some suites are now 3,000-square-foot units and worth more than \$1 million."

Granite counters in the kitchen and bathrooms, laminate flooring throughout main areas and upgraded designer fixtures are featured.

All the suites have big balconies – about 400 square feet to 500 square feet – so residents can enjoy the scenic views. There is also a rooftop lounge with a fireplace and barbecue. Inside, amenities include a fitness facility, private catering space and bar serving area. Concierge service is planned.

With the Grand River nearby, residents can enjoy many leisure activities.

"You can rollerblade or bicycle to Paris or Kitchener – or enjoy the local rowing club's facilities," de Haas says.

"There have been two groups of buyers. The majority are local people who are downsizing and the other group is the 30- to 45-year-old professional person who is working in the region of Waterloo or commuting to the GTA," he says.

GO Transit access near the site is a strong possibility as well.

Local buyers have been patient and followed the complex, bureaucratic procedures required by the province, region, municipality and conservation authorities.

"Buyers have wanted to participate in the project because there is nothing like it from a location or product perspective," de Haas says. "We've held regular purchaser meetings and they joined the political lobbying to get it approved."

The project required an 18-month focus study, an alignment of municipal and regional planning guidelines and policies and an amendment to the Municipal Act. After the approval process, De Haas and development manager Rob Gazzola were approached by Nudura, an insulated concrete form manufacturer. Insulated concrete forms are said to create a building that's more energy efficient to operate, reduce noise and feature recycled products and procedures.

"Our buyers were excited that the site was not only being remedied, but the building was going to feature this form of construction using many recycled materials and products," de Haas says. "So we are leading up to a LEED compliant building with suites for less than \$350 per square foot."

Waterscape could hardly get any greener. The site was being cleaned up, old concrete building foundations were being crushed on site and used for the granular base, recycled steel was used for the piles and insulated concrete forms were chosen.

"This project has also served as a catalyst for many other businesses, amenities and service providers attracted to the area. By the time Waterscape is fully developed, it will be a \$120 million project," de Haas says. "The city has been committed to it and despite conflict

**HAASTOWN**  
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## Brownfield to environmental jewel *cont'd...*

and delays, we wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for the support of the ward councillor much more than just bricks and mortar to us."

The sales centre is at 170 Water St. N. in Cambridge. Hours are Monday to Wednesday, 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., weekends and holidays, noon to 5 p.m. Closed Friday.

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