

# Green Guelph builder leads by example

Terra View Homes appears poised to build on its reputation as a corporate citizen committed to trying to do things right.

The builder and its owner, Andrew Lambden, are set to proceed on plans to develop a subdivision on the Hart farm property in Guelph's south end. But before that gets far along, they are undertaking to establish nesting structures for the barn swallows that have come to make the old Hart barn their nesting habitat.

This nesting infrastructure is being designed for the 32 birds that the building firm's research has indicated will return to the site. And it's being readied in advance of the May 1 arrival date for the swallows that an environmental consultant has suggested.

This initiative is noteworthy, careful attention to sustaining something important that might otherwise easily be placed at risk by this proposed development or by the potential collapse of the 170-year-old barn on the property. A city report finds the structure has deteriorated to the point where it can't be saved and now represents a danger just to be around because it could collapse at any time.

Lambden expressed disappointment to city council this week over the need to remove the barn for safety reasons. He underscored his firm's interest in preserving the heritage of the dilapidated old building by disclosing that it has computer modelled the barn. Next, he said the building will be extensively photographed and finally Mennonite workers with experience in taking down heritage barns will assist with its "careful disassembly." He said materials from the barn will be reused in the redevelopment of the farm property.

This is terrific leadership in this sector.

It follows other Terra View projects that have made similar marks.

Seven years ago, for example, it purchased a green space parcel at the city's northeast corner and rather than clear the land to prepare for new homes, the company removed invasive species such as buckthorn and then planted approximately 1,500 native species trees. It also put several hectares of long-abandoned farmland back into active production, and installed a solar array on a barn on the property that generates more energy than the barn uses for geothermal heating and lighting.

Terra View and Lambden have created a development tradition that deserves the respect and admiration of the community and the industry.

We wish them luck with barn swallow habitat creation and what comes next for them in their effort to keep seeking to sustainably build this business.