

**Building to last**

# Fresh as the day they moved in

Willsons' Markham home has stood the test of time due to the high calibre work of builders

Markham has undergone a tremendous transformation since 1985, when Barbara and Ron Willson moved into their brand-new Greenpark home in Penhurst Court. Now the houses in their neighbourhood, which is close to 16th Ave. and McCowan Rd., are not brand-new anymore and the trees have matured. Markham, formerly a township and now officially a city with a skyrocketing population, has blossomed into a thriving residential community. "From 16th [Ave.] to Major Mackenzie Dr., it's nothing but houses," says Ron, an active retiree who used to work for Service Canada.

The neighbourhood has been a great place to raise a family. The Willsons' now-adult son and daughter have moved away, as have most of the local kids, and new, younger families have started moving onto the street. But Barbara recalls fondly how her family used to join in the summer potluck picnics at the end of the quiet cul-de-sac where their house is located.

Greenpark Homes continues to play a part in shaping the neighbourhood. Currently under construction, UV2 — the first condo tower in the area — is part of Greenpark's nearby Upper Village community at 16th Ave. and Markham Rd. It's a multi-family condo development ideally suited for homeowners like the Willsons, retirees who eventually might be looking to downsize but

want to remain in the community they've come to love — and choose to stay with a reputable builder they know they can trust.

Lino Pellicano, vice-president of the high-rise division of Greenpark, says that creating quality homes is held in the highest regard by the company. "It's part of our everyday focus on every project," says Pellicano. "We see quality home-building as our primary promise of benefit to our buyers. But we also focus great effort on selecting premium locations with great neighbourhood amenities."

It's the same story across the GTA, where committed developers are working hard to meet the demands of a robust market by offering a wide variety of homes that are built to last.

"The quality of new homes in the GTA is among the best in the world," notes Bryan Tuckey, president of the Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD). "Greenpark Homes is just one of our member companies that help to build vibrant, well-planned, well-designed complete communities across the GTA for the up to 100,000 people and 50,000 jobs that come to this region every year."

Meanwhile, the Willson residence has weathered the last 28 years well. The 2,056-sq.-ft., 4-bedroom detached home, purchased by the couple in 1984 for \$110,000, looks as good as new. "It's been solid and

low-maintenance," says Barbara, a semi-retired nurse.

For starters, it was built properly and has received a fair bit of TLC from its owners. The Willsons have replaced the roof and upgraded the furnace. And a few years ago, they launched what they've dubbed their "local infrastructure maintenance program," with the goal of keeping their home looking its best for years to come. In addition to new flooring and new windows throughout the house, they replaced all the kitchen appliances and installed new cabinetry and a granite countertop. Barbara has also developed a penchant for painting, which has freshened up the look of the home's interior. Indeed, the walls are awash with her favourite hue: cranberry. Says Barbara, "If all it takes is a coat of paint to make our home look as fresh as it did the day we moved in, then that's what quality means to me."

But the Willsons maintain that the renovations and improvements were done only to enhance the house. The bones of their home — the structure itself, the mechanical systems and all other critical elements — have held up admirably. "We spend a lot of time here," says Ron. "And it's always been a nice, secure place to come home to."



Ron and Barbara Willson have lived in their Markham home since 1985.

**The Willson home timeline**

- 1985**: Barbara and Ron Willson's Greenpark home under construction in Markham.
- 1995**: Barbara's original kitchen.
- 2000**: The Willson's TLC over the years kept their home fresh.
- 2007**: Kitchen makeover with new appliances, cabinetry and granite countertop.
- 2013**: The bones of the home — the structure, mechanical systems and all other critical elements — are intact 28 years later.

## New life for old space

Late 19th-century Liberty Village warehouse will be preserved and reinvented for modern use

Hullmark Developments' 60 Atlantic, an adaptive reuse project downtown, in the heart of Liberty Village, will be building on a rich history of quality construction.

The project will transform a turn-of-the-century warehouse into a commercial development that will create space for boutique offices and restaurants. Hullmark will be replacing 60 Atlantic's mechanical systems, updating the electrical work and installing an elevator in the building, which dates back to 1898.

"The structure itself is built to last," notes Jeff Hull, Hullmark's president. "But we're planning on owning this building for the long term, so we want

to make sure we invest up front in the most efficient mechanical systems to lower our operating costs and ensure that the building will last another hundred years."

Leona Savoie, Hullmark's vice-president, underscores the importance of top-notch construction work in commercial real estate. "It's in our favour to use quality materials that will last," she explains. "You don't want to go in and replace, say, the flooring every five years, because that costs money and it's also disruptive to tenants."

Adds Hull, "Commercial tenants are making multi-million-dollar decisions for a period of 10-plus years. So, they



Project developer Jeff Hull wants the new building to last another hundred years at least.

want to partner with the highest-quality landlords out there, and that takes the form of quality buildings,

quality operations and quality property management and tenant relationships."

This is the second in an four-part series sponsored by BILD. Look for the next one on Sat., May 11.



# BUILDING TO LAST

Across the GTA, the industry is creating new complete communities and revitalizing existing neighbourhoods through high-quality design and construction, mixed-use development and support for essential public infrastructure. To learn more, visit [www.bildgta.ca](http://www.bildgta.ca).