

Intelligent Renovators Working for Gold

We know how great it is to work in an environmentally healthy and green building, so how could we refuse the MacDonells' request for an ACU Builder's Mortgage to build their home to LEED standards?

If they are successful, their home could be the first single-family dwelling in Manitoba constructed by the home owner to LEED standards. And we know they'll succeed with their vision to get LEED Gold, because they are not your average new homeowners. In fact they are the driving force behind I.R.I.S. Contractors (Intelligent Renovation and Inspection Services Inc.) — a Winnipeg builder committed to building green.

"We're environmental entrepreneurs," says Lisa MacDonell, who co-owns the five-year-old company with her husband Matt, a 15-year veteran carpenter.

Lisa and Matt have used their practical and flexible ACU Builder's Mortgage to buy an

infill lot in Winnipeg's older Crescentwood neighbourhood. The lot was vacant and once had a derelict house on it that the City of Winnipeg ordered demolished. So, by choosing to build on an existing city lot, they immediately earned LEED points. "We believe in what we are doing and we believe there is no reason why others can't build beyond the normal and minimal building codes. It's the right thing to do and it's affordable to do," Lisa says.

Over the years Matt has noticed more and more Winnipeggers are catching on to the advantage of green construction. "Two years ago people who came to our I.R.I.S. booth at the Home Expressions Show really didn't know much about the products and systems we were recommending. A year later they were asking really specific questions. Now there's a momentum and people seek us out," Matt says.

"Our corporate goal is to demonstrate to people that

they can build a sustainable green home that will continue to save resources and money for about the same initial cost as your average code-built home," he said. "We want to prove how affordable green housing can be by concentrating on reduction and efficiencies before adding the more costly luxury green items such as solar cells or geothermal heating which don't typically yield financial return in the short term and are not always affordable for everyone." "We're practical green builders," Lisa adds.

Marten Duhoux, Chair of the Manitoba Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council says he's not surprised the MacDonells have found support at ACU when it came time to get a mortgage.

"We have, too. ACU has been a long-time sponsor and supporter of the Canada Green Building Council. They co-partnered with us on the *Your Greener Home* resource materials and parlayed

that into an incredible website filled with environmental tips for homeowners. Their commitment to this community and to our environment runs very deep. And our city is a better place because of it," Duhoux says. □



LISA AND MATT MACDONELL, CO-OWNERS OF I.R.I.S. CONTRACTORS, LIVING THEIR LEED DREAM WITH AN ACU BUILDER'S MORTGAGE.